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# **Shiva Yoga of Meditation**

**You're Shaivism Meditation Handbook**

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# Shiva Yoga of Meditation

## Lord Shiva

Lord Shiva is considered the supreme deity, the ultimate source and goal by the Saivite sect. The Pashupata, Shaiva Siddhanta and some other sects view Shiva as equal to, or even greater than the Absolute (Brahman). Shiva's character, unlike Vishnu is 'ambivalent,' as he can be a moral and paternal god, or a god of outsiders, of those outside the Brahmanical mainstream, worshipped in various ways. Several Tantric cults are also associated with Shiva.

In classical Hindu mythology Shiva is the god of destruction, generally portrayed as a yogin who lives on Mount Kailasa in the Himalayas. His body is smeared with ashes, his hair piled up in matted locks. He wears an animal skin and carries a trident. A cobra often serves as his garland and the crescent moon as his hair ornament. He has a third eye, kept closed in the middle of his forehead. He may be surrounded by his beautiful wife Parvati, and their two sons, the six-faced Skanda and the elephant-headed Ganesha.

The ancient name of Shiva is Rudra, the Wild God. The Rig-Veda (10.61 and 1.71) tells that when time was about to begin he appeared as a wild hunter, aflame, his arrow directed against the Creator (Prajapati) making love with his virgin daughter, the Dawn (Usas). The Creator, terribly frightened, made Rudra Lord of Animals (Pasupati) for sparing his life.

A key theme that first appears in later Vedic literature is the god's rather ambiguous relation to the sacrificial oblations and offerings. Originally Rudra-Shiva seems to have been at least partly excluded from orthodox Vedic sacrifices and thus has to demand his share of the offerings, sometimes described as the share that is 'left-over' (ucchista). In the classical mythology of Hinduism, this theme is incorporated into Shiva's conflict with his first father-in-law, the brahman named Daksha, whose sacrifice Shiva destroys because he was not invited to it. Shiva beheads Daksha and then replaces it with that of a goat, the sacrificial animal.

Many of the main episodes in the Shiva myth cycle revolve around the dynamic tension between Shiva as the god equally of asceticism and eroticism, a master of both yogic restraint and sexual prowess.

Shiva destroys Kama, the god of erotic love, with the fire from his third eye when Kama attempts to disturb his ascetic trance. Subsequently Parvati, daughter of the Himalaya, wins Shiva's love through her own ascetic penance and persuades him to revive Kama in disembodied form. For his visit to the pine forest Shiva wears the guise of a naked ash-smeared ascetic, but he uses the occasion to seduce, or attempt to seduce, the wives of the forest sages. As a

result, either of the sages' curse or of his own action, Shiva is castrated and his phallus, or linga, becomes fixed in the earth. The stylized stone linga, mounted on an equally stylized vulva, or yoni, has become the central image of Saiva worship and serves as the dual symbol of the god's creative and ascetic power.

By chopping off the fifth head of Brahma, Shiva is charged with the major sin of the murder of a Brahman and must undertake the penance, or the Great Vow (mahavrata), of the Skull-Bearer (kapalin), an ascetic who wanders about with a skull as a begging bowl. This Great Vow becomes the archetypical basis of the ascetic sect of the Kapalikas or Mahavratins, who are equally noted for their indulgence in the orgiastic rites of Tantric character. The complicated myth of the birth of the six-faced Skanda, a son of Shiva, exists in a number of very different versions. In part, Skanda is the son of Shiva and Parvati, but he is at the same time the son of Agni and of the six Krittikas. His role is to destroy the terrible demon Taraka.

The three sons of Taraka later establish the mighty triple city of the demons, which Shiva eventually destroys with a single arrow from his bow, Pinaka. Another demon named Andhaka, the blind son of Shiva and/or of the demon Hiranyaksha, lusts after Parvati but is defeated and reformed by Shiva. Shiva beheads his Ganesha, whom he has never met, when Ganesha tries to prevent the apparent stranger from entering the room of Parvati, Shiva's wife and Ganesha's mother. Shiva then replaces his son's head with that of an elephant with one broken tusk, just as he once replaced Daksha's head with that of a goat.

Shiva is transcendent and at the same time the Self of each individual. In southern India to worship Shiva one must first purify the body with water before entering the sacred space.

One must then present Shiva with beautiful things that symbolize one's heart and soul. The presents can be incense, flowers or anything of beauty.

The presents must include a ripe coconut which the priest dashes against a stone surface spilling its contents in front of the lingam or idol (Shiva's sign). The nut represents the human skull, the home of the hardened ego. So the act of dashing the coconut represents the sacrifice of the ego to the greater self.

Because the ego strongly defends itself, ego-centred individuals avoid Shiva who demands this sacrifice. Indeed, they may see Shiva as a Devil.

The gods and goddesses, demons and demonesses of India are innumerable. The myths about them are even greater in number. Shiva is outside this polytheistic background.

His worship enables his worshiper to explore their innermost nature and understand the wisdom of ancient history. Carl Gustav Jung might have called Shiva a unique image of the Eurasian collective unconscious.

Shiva is a power capable of shaking lives by sending intuitions, subconscious images from depths beneath our rational consciousness. Shiva is an archetype that works on many levels.

The first image of Shiva is man's recognition of his humanity. That image became the ruler of all other archetypes. It is the key to the mystery of humanity. The West celebrated the Light, the path to liberation, as Christ, in imitation of Hinduism.

However, the Indians call the present time period in the West the Dark ages because Europe, The United States and other Western nations appear to have lost the understanding of the images, rituals and expressions of the archetype.

Westerners have become too involved with consumerism and so depression, anxiety befogs our understanding of our essence.

In India the archetype is remembered and more easily accessed. The West can relearn the understanding of God and Self, Shiva, the gracious one. By studying the Indian worship of Shiva. India is a living collection of the stages humanity has traversed.

At the beginning are thirty to sixty million hunters and gatherers called adavasi who live in ancient ways in the jungles and mountains. They conjure spirits and dance shamanic dances.

Next come swidden and hoe farmers who worship the Great Mother of fertility which bloody animal sacrifices are given to the earth to create fertility. In remote provinces there are still reports of child sacrifice where the body is dismembered and bits buried in different fields to increase crops.

The dominant culture has evolved from Indo-European tribes of cattle herders how conquered India five thousand years ago. These Aryans were patriarchal warriors. They brought horses, horse sacrifice, worship of fire, sun and holy cows and a language kin to the European tongues with them.

The wisdom of this tradition was eventually recorded in the Vedic scriptures . Aryan domination lasted without major threat until the twelfth century. At that point Muslim fanatics attempted to invade India. They were eventually absorbed although their culture has been preserved in Muslim ghettos of India's cities.

Zarathustrian fire worshipers fled from Persia to India. Jews came to India when the Romans' destroyed the temple at Jerusalem. The Portuguese brought Christianity to Goa. The British dominated India for two hundred years and left

well trained officials, cricket, teatime, Hindu English. All the emigration and invasion left a trace on India.

Each culture had some part in forming the current version of the Archetype. The Shamanistic hunters provided the base in Shiva who trance dances, who has horns and is the lord of the animals and the guardian of the soul. They called him Pashupati.

The matriarchal planters made the Great Goddess his companion who represented magical powers. She was called Shakti. They also connected him to the fertility symbol, the phallus, serpents and bulls. The Aryans turned him into a fire god, Agni and introduced soma (an intoxicating drink), into the worship.

They also connected him to the howling storm god, Rudra. Zarathustrian who believed in one God who is God of Gods the people of India accepted, as Shiva. Shiva is the Great God. All other gods are part of Shiva or masks of Shiva.

Gods that were once powerful are demoted to background roles. For example, Agni becomes the wheel of fire in which Shiva dances the act of creation and destruction.

Because the Hindus have no problem worshiping God in female form, Shiva can be worshiped as a female, or as male and female at the same time.

Shaivites and Sadhus generally see Shiva in male form. They do however recognized that he exists only through the grace of Shakti a female ground of being.

Wandering Shiva Sadhus still perform rituals outdoors; however after the invasion of Alexander the Great rectangular stone temples were built. The interior contains a small stone shrine to Shiva with a phallic stone, lingam signifying Shiva's presence.

Above the sacred spot of the shrine a tower rises which is decorated with gods symbolizing the centre of the universe. The assembly hall faces the shrine with its roof supported with many stone columns.

The temple represents the sacred physical presence of the god. The doorway is feet, the shrine his heart, and the tower is his head and neck.

The Syrian Christians led by the apostle Thomas settled in India. They gave Shaivism a different turn. The bhakti school preached by Tamil saints depicted Shiva the dancing god and the God of Love, similar to Christ.

God's love is found in the devotee's heart. The Lingayat sect believes that gaining god within comes not through good works but out of Shiva's great gift toward humanity. So Shiva is seen as a saviour who brings the human being to safety without the human having to do anything.

Shiva drank the world's poison created by the other gods churning the primal ocean. To these worshipers, Shiva is both a caring mother and a good shepherd.

Even Western psychotherapy and transpersonal psychology has influenced the modern worship of Shiva by Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh's reinterpretation

Some Indian scholars have tried to interpret Shiva historically. They claim that Shiva is a real person who lived five thousand years ago and invented tools, speech, fire, music and human civilization.

He is also the father of human kind with his three wives. Gauri was the mother of the white race; Durga was the mother of the yellow race; and Parvati was the mother of the black race.

Some even go so far as to see the rounded cement core of an atomic energy plant as a lingam and the terrifying energy of atoms as potential Shakti power.

Usually pictured as a naked god with matted hair and a trident in his hand, Shiva is unattractive. He is danger; bestiality. Civilized man attempts to proclaim him dead, but this Archetype is till capable of shaking us.

The flower children of the sixties who visited India brought Shiva, Kali, and Krishna back with them. The practice of Yoga spread in the United States. Shiva is Mahayogi, the lord of yoga.

The drug culture knows Shiva as Aushadhisvara, lord of herbs and drugs. Rastafarians with dreds even looks like an African version of the Shiva sadhu.

The romantic natural man who can talk to animals and make passionate love to his companion is again the archetype of Shiva as Pashupati. Tarzan is a literary creation that fits this pattern.

Human beings are able to think about themselves. This thinking usually takes one of two forms factual/scientific and fictional/mythic. An example of this is the scientific field of archaeology's discovery of a hearth that is dated five hundred thousand years old.

Mankind had some control of fire or at least their fear of fire that long ago. Myth deals with mankind's discovery of fire through light bearers like Prometheus and Lucifer.

In India fire plays a part in most rites. Women baking bread will flick bits of dough into the fire and call the gods names. The dead are burned so that their earthly bodies are diffused into Brahmin or to rise as smoke to be absorbed by water vapor and returned to earth as rain. Heroes are sometimes born of fire as Shiva's son Kartrikeya was.

Scientists too are haunted by the image of light. The scientific theory of evolution uses cosmic radiation and electrical lighting being discharged into the sea as the spark of life.

Nearly every culture has had a god of fire. For example, the Norse have the god Loki, The Baltic people had Perkun, and in India it was Agni and then Shiva. There is a basic connection between stone, fire making and fertility.

The flint starts the fire and is the image of a phallus through which life fire is passed. It becomes associated with thundering god of heavens who impregnates the Mother Earth with lightning.

To primitive humans heat of fire, of sex by physical effort of dance, hunt, battle, all came from same source, the cosmic spirit of fire. Ascetic practices make one holy because it traps the heat unspent in sexual acts.

Because of their fiery holiness the fakir or shaman can walk on coals sit naked in the cold, and spread heat into souls not as warm as their own. The word "shaman" refers to an ascetic who tries ardently. Ashrams are a place to heat up or where heated work is done.

Shiva is the lord of all ascetics, fakirs, and shamans. He contains the heat of the universe in the lingam. At the end of time Shiva's heat will destroy creation just as it generated creation and will regenerate it.

Ancient societies around the world set up boulders megaliths, styles, and minihirs as a centre for religious activity. Freud interprets such stones as phalluses. They are gateways to other worlds. In India these became temple lingam and are washed with coconut juice or Ganges water.

The heat of the flame is dialectically opposite to water. It melts ice to water. Life arises from such opposition. Water is the feminine counterpart of masculine fire. It heals, cleans, and gives birth.

Many religions combine the imagery of fire and water. Christianity says that those engulfed by the fire of the Holy Spirit will seek to be baptized in holy water. A fever is the conflict of the two. Heat causes sweat which bathes the victim.

Creation of artificial fever in the sweat lodge in an old Shamanistic technique. It purifies body and soul to enable communication with the gods. Shiva who combines all opposites is Lord of the fever.

While Shiva's name is not mentioned until well after the Paleolithic age, his presence is there. Shiva is all, but predominantly Lord of the Fire. Early myths depict him at the beginning of creation as a pillar of fire from which the world came.

In Benares a column of light, divine lightning is revered. The natives worship Kashi nicknamed the shining one. Benares is also called the great funeral pyre, and in the mystic geography of India Benares is the blazing third eye of Shiva.

Legend says that the fire used to kindle the cremation pyres has never been restarted since it came from the first fire on earth. In the cremation process if the skull does not explode in the fire one of the attendants must break it open with a bamboo pole so the soul can leave the body as a miniature Shiva.

The departing soul dances like Shiva and the demons and goblins which accompany it represent the sins of the corpse.

In the birth of the Saviour Karttikeya sired by Shiva and borne by the Goddess combines the opposites fire and water.

The story says that Shiva and the Goddess made love for ten thousand years while the spirits in heaven were oppressed by Tataka, a demon. Agni the fire god was sent to remind Shiva and the Goddess that sex is not meant for pleasure only and that they should create progeny.

As a turtledove Agni interrupted the lovemaking and caused Shiva to spill his seed through the air and into the beak of the dove. The Goddess cursed the bird and the spirits who had sent him. Agni tumbled back to the hall of Brahma.

The river goddess Ganga thought her water would be cold enough to cool down the hot seed so Agni gave her the seed. After ten thousand years she had exhausted herself in trying to cool it off. Brahma told her to leave the brining seed in the reeds by the river.

In ten thousand years a child will be born. She did and all the animals, human beings and vegetation in the area looked like hammered gold. Eventually a baby came and the six Pleaders who were playing on that shore found the baby.

Karttikeya grew six heads so he could nurse each of them simultaneously. So the son of Shiva, the conqueror of demons was born. His mother was part The Goddess Earth, part Agni or fire, part Ganga or water and part the Pleaders or air and cosmic space.

Everyone has a primitive hunter and a shaman in their soul. In hunting tribes animals are the primary concern. Furs, fangs claws become decoration for the human body. Children are named animal names, and frequently ancestry is traced to a totem animal.



Which are celebrated annually in rites of increase. These rites include dancing, drumming, fasting, self-inflict pain, the use of mind altering drugs. The goal was for the individuals to contact the animal spirits that were their guardians.

When an anthropologist is introduced to Shiva he will probably identify him as a super Shaman. After all in one of his incarnations he is depicted with a drum in one hand and fire in another. The drum is a universal symbol for Shaman.

Shiva is Lord of the ecstatic dance. Incarnated as Rudra he transcends logic, he is wild. As Ardhanari he is androgynous as were many shaman who considered themselves the brides of some god.

Shamans allow no cutting of the hair because each hair is an antenna in contacting the gods. So the matted hair of Shiva is shown as uncut.

Shiva is said to have 1008 names. Pashupati or Lord of Animals is one of the most commonly used. In this form he is the guardian of the farmers animals and keeper of souls.

Sharva another of his names is the hunter. In one legend Sharva appears to Arujuna in as a savage of the jungle or even a were-tiger or a feral human being living outside civilization.

Shiva's sceptre is the spear, a hunting weapon, but the tip has been multiplied by three to make it a trident. Frequently the trident by itself acts as a symbol for Shiva. He may have two, four, eight, ten or thirty-two hands.

He may carry the ax, the hand drum, the staff, the bow and arrow, a simple spear, a sling and a divining rod. Other objects frequently shown in his hand include a deer, a string of beads, a discus, a skull a lotus, or as sword.

He is comparable to Apollo in the ability to shoot fever and disease to his enemies with his bow. He and his dogs are frequently linked to the constellation Westerners call Orion and the star Sirius.

The noose is also part of a hunter's bag of tricks. It can also be a symbol of universal law, which binds all to follow right. Odin carried a noose and sacrifices were hung on trees to him. Shiva uses his noose to tie his followers into the discipline of yoga.

In the form of Bhairava, Shiva rides a black dog. Dogs were probably the first domesticated animals. As predators they became associated with war, violence, battles. If Shiva takes the form of a dog and eats a corpse it is to free the soul.

Cerberus the Greek conveyor of souls to the underworld was pictured as dog faced. Goethe used this archetype in his Faust when he has Satan appear as a black poodle.

As God of the dead Shiva is surrounded by drunken, dancing people who take animal form, vampires, ghosts, flesh eating ghosts, evil dwarfs, elves and witches.

Techniques to induce ecstasy or trance are taught in torturous initiations. South Asia has Shiva Mahayogi the patron of self-discipline as the enabler that helps man step into another dimension of reality. Odin inspired asceticism. His legend includes hanging upside down for nine days to get the Runes of wisdom.

Eight legged animals represent a bier carried by four mourners. Shiva sometimes shows up as a Sphinx with eight legs. In another connection to death devotees of Shiva attempt to envision themselves as skeletons.

This vision is connected to Shiva's mother, Punitaviti. She married and the young couple enjoyed giving food to the poor disciples of Shiva. One day a wondering monk gave two ripe mangos to the husband who gave them to Punitaviti to store.

He left on business and a hungry beggar knocked on the door. Punitaviti gave one of the mangos to him. Her husband returned ate the first mango, wanted the second, so Punitaviti prayed for one and it dropped into her lap. Her husband thought it was delicious.

When her husband asked her about whether the fruit was what had been given to him that morning, Punitaviti confessed. Her husband requested more fruit and more fruit for which she prayed repeatedly and each time received.

Suddenly the husband realizes what he has become, greedy and decides he is not fit to be married to a holy woman, so he disappears. Eventually she discovers him in another city remarried and with children, so she shakes the flesh off her bones and goes looking for Shiva.

When she arrives at holy ground, afraid to touch it with her feet she inverts herself and goes the mountain head first, as a child enters the birth canal.

Shamanistic initiations occur at night in graveyards where Shiva and his ghouls love to dance. The initiate puts aside his regular clothing and dresses in unstitched orange cloth representing the flames. He is dead to the world as the corpses burning in the graveyards.

He smears himself with ashes from the corpses. The grounds of cremation become a symbol of the illusion of existence, which the shaman is leaving

behind through asceticism. Tourists sometimes observe such initiations in Benares.

They are not allowed to take pictures and are told to look at the bits and pieces of the corpses or the vultures and jackals. The idea is that they learn the ephemeral nature of human existence, especially their own and thus earn magical powers or even freedom from illusion from Shiva.

Shiva's ugliest embodiment is Bhairava has sixty-four manifestations which have female consorts. The manifestations include " the skull carrier," "one with black limbs," "destruction," "the howler," "the wild one," "the angry one, " "the insane one," and " the black one."

"The howler" is like Odin in his frenzied state. In central and Northern Europe November storms are associated with Odin just as in India, violent storms are associated with Bhairava in his howler manifestation.

Shivatari or Shiva's night is celebrated in India in February is not very different from fool festivals, carnivals and masked dances around the world. It is kin to Mardi Gras.

In Indian cities, the gods and goddesses flourish in posters and handbills that plaster the walls. In addition gods have become the main characters in the biggest film industry in the world.

The names of the gods are also used to guarantee the quality of objects for sale. India's most popular rock group is called Shiva. City walls also have signs and symbols like the swastika decorating them. The swastika is a symbol of the sun, an indication of good luck.

It connects with the discus of Vishnu. Its four arms represent the four worlds of the gods, the humans, the animals and the demons. It is the wheel of the universe where Shiva dances. The pranava or symbol of OM also appears frequently.

It drives evil spirits away and works off the results of Karma that still affect the present. On the flags, money and walls of buildings the World Wheel appears with eight spokes. Associated with Vishnu it has become the symbol of eternal or divine law.

The Lingam Yoni is another symbol of importance. It is a smooth, highly polished egg-shaped stone that stand in an oval flat receptacle. The stone is the lingam; the receptacle is the Yoni.

The lingam contains all things that are were or will be. It is the gateway to both life and death. The Hindu see the lingam as Shiva and as the bridge between ephemeral and eternal.

The lingam is like the prehistoric menhirs, dolmens, and monoliths. Sometimes they are seen as the navel of the universe. All cultures and religions seem to have had or still have stones that are viewed as sacred:

The Shiva lingam comes from the same archetype. Out of a lingam, Shiva can become a personal God for the worshippers and the form the manifestation takes depends solely on the personality and spiritual development of the worshiper.

The lingam began as a phallic symbol celebrating procreation. The Yoni it rests in represents the vulva of the Great Goddess. The union of the two reconciles all dichotomies and disharmonies, just as Shiva embodies the primal oneness of the divine and demonic.

Myth says that in the first age of the world the lingam was pure light; in the second age it became pure gold, in the third age it was silver, and today they are just stone.

While the lingam began as a representation of an erect male member, the Arabs during the twelfth century persecuted what they saw as lewd, idolatrous art. At that time the Brahmins defended the lingam as a symbol of a transcendent God who has no image.

It has no concrete associations. When Christian missionaries appeared, followed by the British Victorians, the Brahmins repeated the argument that the lingam is no longer a phallic symbol but an object to concentrate the spirit during meditations.

The Aryan Vedas do condemn the pre-Aryan worship of the phalli. Orthodox Hindus today reject the implication that sexual organs are worshipped in the lingam and Yoni.

The conflict between these two points of view has existed for a long time. Opinions also vary about where the original fiery lingam appeared. Many say Benares, but the Nepalese say it was the Katmandu Valley. Some say that anyone who searches for this lingam will find it very close to home.

The Shaivites see a holy trinity of gods: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva as three parts of the super god Shiva. The Vishnu claim that Vishnu is the one God and all others are partial aspects of him. Shiva and Vishnu are about equally worshipped in India. Brahma has no temples and no offerings.

Icons or sacred images are part of Hinduism. Shiva has many icons but there are three very popular ones. The first is of Samara an ascetic in deep peaceful meditation. He is covered in ashes and sits in a snowy mountainous land.

The second is Maharaja who dances in the middle of a circle of flames. He beats out the rhythm of life on a hand drum. The third shows Shiva and Parvati with their children on the mountains in the spring.

Samara with his snow-white body is the embodiment of the peace achieved through the dissolution of desire and passion. His athletic build speaks of the potential for action. His messy hair is held in a topknot by a hissing cobra.

The Ganges spouts from the cobra. On the left side of his forehead Shank wears a delicate silver crescent representing the new born moon, mind, measuring, memory and time. Soma is the name of the moon as well as of the drink of the gods.

Shank wears necklace of skulls that his devotees imitate by wearing a necklace of acorn sized shriveled Rudra beads. Victors in spiritual battles against vices wear undertakes beads to indicate the conquering of desire.

These seeds are classified by size, colour number of wrinkles. Most of the time these beads have five wrinkles. A two faceted bead or Shiva-Shakti guarantees the possessor that all his wishes will come true. A single meeting with a single faceted bead guarantees that the soul is freed from all sins.

Trauma is another of Shiva's names. Tryambaka has a third eye in the middle of his forehead. It must remain closed for the beam from it can annihilate everything that comes within its range.

In Indo-European traditions the number three represents wholeness. Probably imitating Hinduism, Christianity kept the symbolism in the Trinity. Lord Shiva's three eyes are connected to all trinities: creation, preservation, destruction; Brahman, Vishnu, Shiva; past, present, future; and on and on.

Shankara has three stripes of white ash smeared across his forehead. Shiva's disciples wear these three stripes. The disciples of Vishnu wear a vertical V or U with a red dot in its middle. The ashes must be from a holy fire or a funeral pyre.

In order to wear the ashes, the devotee must rise each day before dawn, bathe, recite the Vedic Gayatri Mantra. Then he may apply the ashes using three fingers of his right hand.

He must then drink some ash dissolved in water of the Ganges. If he fails to perform any part of the ritual, he is considered impure and must purify himself.

Shankara has a blue neck, it is said. As a consequence of an encounter with the churning ocean of milk. The sea is a symbol for meditation; the oceanic depths, the unconscious mind.

For westerners much of this is interpreted as parables and archetypes. Hindu peasants regard them as literally true. All experiences are real and natural and illusory and supernatural. They make no separation.

Buddha, Siddhartha Gotama, was at one point a Shaivite ascetic like Shankara. He sat at the base of the cosmic tree, the axis of the world, the bridge between heaven, earth and the underworld.

While sitting he watched the chain of karma die out and so reached nirvana and became the Enlightened one.

Shankara's trident represents the cosmic tree and he too has reached nirvana.

Like Shiva Buddha was itinerant dressed in the saffron robes of a begging monk. He belonged to a group of sadhus devoted to Shiva led by Makkhali Gosala. Both Buddha and Shiva have elongated ear lobes.

Buddha's indicate his noble caste; Shankara's indicate the yogic ability of clairaudience. They are both connected to resting deer often used to indicate a calm mind.

The stories of Shankara Shiva are much older than those of the historic Buddha or Mahvir, founder of the Jains In Brahamanda Purana, Shiva appears in the first age as a yogi, in the second age he is Krau, in the third age doomsday fire, and in the present age he became Buddha.

In India historical facts rapidly become transformed into myth. Mahatma Gandhi, India Gandhi, and Subhas Chandra Bose are becoming part of the Hind pantheon.

While the Aryan invaders were patriarchal and substituted the male gods for the earlier female gods, in India goddesses became important again in the Hindu culture. Particularly in the Bengali Mother cult and the Shakti cult.

In those cults the Mother becomes the universe, Maya (the illusion of variety in the creation) and kalla( the illusion of time coming and going) "Shakti" means energy. Shiva is the consciousness of self; Shakti is being or essence.

Monism demands that there be only a single transcendent truth. So Shiva and Shakti are not two entities, but one. He is the peaceful centre; she is the energy radiating from that centre.

Saravasti is the White goddess who rides a swan. In India she is the inspiration or energy of the artist, writer, healer. Lakshmi is the red goddess and the faithful wife of Vishnu. She represents good luck.

The two goddesses jealous of each other often fight. Perhaps this is a metaphor for the artists' poverty and the rich man's insensitivity to beauty. Devi or the radiant one is the other half of Shiva.

No god can be without his Shakti or other half. Yet Parvati is Shiva's wife. Shaktis have good and bad sides and Durga is Shiva's dark Shakti. She is a royal amazon. She is also the nemesis of all who attempt to avoid their dharma or duty.

Probably Kali is the darkest of the Shakti's. She represents the night, fertility, the abyss of life before and after life. She destroys all and is especially the enemy of the ego who wishes to create a monument for itself.

She is sometimes described as a devoted mother her destroys the monster of egoism. Calcutta is Kali's city. The peasants there saw Mother Theresa dressed in white, the colour of death, as Kali because of her interest in the dyeing.

One of Kali's cults were the thugees from which English gained the word thugs. When Kali sent good omens, the thugs would rob and kill tourists and pilgrims. They always strangled their victims because in one battle Kali created two men from her sweat to kill the monsters she was battling.

She admonished them to strangle the monsters because every drop of monster blood that hit the ground created another monster. It wasn't until a British officer discovered their cult that anyone attempted to end their killings.

He had hundreds of them hanged. One interesting point that the officer discovered was that many of the thugees were originally Muslim. They saw Kali as Fatima, Mohammad's daughter.

Dacoits were another group of armed peasants that operated as a cult of Kali. They terrorized rural areas until the 1980's.

Other shaktis or goddesses include Annapurna the goddess of abundance usually pictured with a bowl and spoon. Ganga is the purest of the river goddesses and the Ganges is her river.

She is another wife of Shiva and the sister of Parvati. Ganga means unlimited flow and constant motion. She represents the flow of life or energy. She also represents the flow of consciousness. At Kashi, Ganga's holy city, the Ganges River is a place of meditation.

The river reflects the archetypes to the visionaries' third eyes. Because the Ganges is shallow and filled with sandbars, steamships cannot travel on it. So it remains a place for reflection. Once you have visited Kashi, it will always be with you.

Shiva-Nataraja is the dancing Shiva. He is the elements of nature mixed. All of nature is dance. It is the almost simultaneous loss and regaining of balance. Shiva's liberated souls are berserks and dervishes.

The shaking of his drum was the first sound of creation. The drum represents the constant process of creation, But the god also stands for preservation, and destruction as well as grace.

The dance is the dance of creation and destruction of the universe. He dances in a fiery ring that represents our hearts. He is The Self.

Shiva's family consists of Parvati his wife and her son Karttikkeya, and Ganga his second wife and Ganesha the second son. Actually The other gods afraid of the combined power of Shiva and Parvati, got Shiva to agree that they would not have children.

Parvati in her anger at this news cursed the wives of the heavenly beings so that they could not have children either. As a result all children of gods are magically created rather than being physically conceived and born.

Karattikeya is also known as Skanda., Gangeya, or Agnibhu. He represents the heroism of the soul triumphing over egoism, illusion and anger.

He has six heads which represent the five senses and discrimination. Six rays shoot from him representing wisdom, objectivity, wealth, strength, fame and power.

Ganesha is the most popular of the Hindu gods. He is worshipped all over Asia. He has an elephant head and is overly fond of sweets. The Hindu version of the tortoise and the hare fable casts Skanda as the hare and Ganesha as the tortoise.

He is the guardian of the threshold, beginnings, scholars, and writers. He also acts somewhat like the gods of mischief in other cultures in that he represents obstacles and also as the remover of obstacles.

He is the alpha and omega of creation. His offerings are incense, red flowers and sweets.

The mounts of the gods are often seen as the negative side of the deities' personality. By taming and riding them the god overcomes his lower nature.

Ganesha's mouse represents the nervous intellect, Parvati's lion is cruelty, Skanda's peacock is vanity, and Shiva's white bull is sexuality.

Shiva becomes Mahades the God of Gods. He is absolute being. All oppositions come to rest in him. As Mahades he is not jealous of other gods. Shiva is pleased by all forms of religion.



They simply reflect a stage of growth in the spirituality of the believer. Since each individual is Shiva, whoever the individual is praying to is Shiva praying to Shiva.

Zarathustria experienced a vision nearly three thousand years ago that has affected Western religions ever since. While the Eastern religions see both good and evil as part of the grand illusion, Zarathustra saw them as absolute opposites who were antagonistic.

In the East Shiva can be both God and Devil. The westerner has a hard time explaining evil in connection to God. God is totally good. In the East, whether Shiva is seen as a God or the Devil is more a reflection on the believer than on the God.

Zarathustria introduced the idea that the universe is divided into light/dark, good/evil, and God/Satan. There is no compromise between the two sides. Each individual must make a choice between the sides. God's (Ahura Mazda) creation is perfect.

Angra Mainyu(Spirit of Evil)) threatens the creation by spreading lies and illusion. Zarathustria condemned the worship of older gods, especially, Shiva. They equated Shiva with Lucifer. Zarathustria also introduced the concepts of hell and heaven, demon and angels.

Many of the views of Zarathustria were introduced in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Today, Jimmy Falwell, Billy Graham, Ossama Ben Laden are all modeled on the prophet, Zarathustria. They struggle to purify the people and refuse to compromise with Satan.

In the East there is a recognition that evil cannot exist without good. They are the same coin, just different sides. As long as the good people struggle against evil, evil will exist. It must exist, if good exists.

Bhagwhan Shree Rajneesh came to America in the 198-'s and attempted to teach a form of Shaivite tantra and humanistic psychology. A primitive energy is pictured as the Kundalini-serpent that resides in the gut.

When awakened the serpent bends to rise and transform into a goddess. It unites with consciousness and creates a state of bliss. Anyone who attempts to fight the rise of the serpent(dark desires) will turn the energy against himself and must fail.

Repressing forbidden desires results in creating a fatal obsession. Rajneesh advised his followers to accept the dark desires or shadows that exist in the believers' souls because they too were Shiva.

He was deported from the United States. Shiva exists in all and to understand him one must go past the division of the universe into good and bad.

In the fifth Veda, Shiva revealed the "weavings" or tantras. Many ancient taboos and traditional laws are violated there. Naturally this upsets many of the more conservative Hindus.

Instead of repressing the dark desires, tantra attempts to make them sacred. The tantra masters believe this is the only approach appropriate for this age.

Classical Hinduism is monist. That is it states that there is really only one ultimate reality despite the appearance of diversity in the material world. Maya or a veil of illusion creates the diversity and hides the unity.

Part of that illusion is that each of us is a separate individual and therefore competition evolves. The only escape from the illusion is to reject the world and withdraw his five senses from the world.

Tantrism on the other hand celebrates the diversity and joyously affirms life. It too is monist, but sees that the unity includes the Maya, the diversity. Maya is lila Shiva's game, the spontaneous overflow of his energy.

One should accept it and enjoy it, but without the involvement of ego attachment. When one accepts that there is no I and other, the soul loves and accepts all as self (Shiva) Everything is divine, but there is no compulsion to worship anything.

Sickness, war, poverty and death are not to be lamented but accepted as part of the divine mother. To see the world as unjust or unfair. Does not fit the tantric belief. To call the world bad is to call Shiva bad is to call one's very Self bad.

Tantrism teaches that all we see all we experience is Self. For example accepting one's sexuality does not mean raping, indulging in pornography, or adultery. Instead, sex is seen as holy as part of the divine.

The struggle against ego is the only battle an individual must undertake. The ego sees everything in relation to itself. It projects itself onto things, distorting reality and entangling the individual in loneliness and fear.

In order to battle the ego, the repression must end and the darkness of Self be acknowledged. Then quiet meditation must be undertaken often with the physical discipline of hatha yoga.

In meditation one gives oneself to recognition that all is one. Oppositions and differences disappear. Sigmund Freud sensed this in his thoughts on the libido. The libido cannot be suppressed it must be transformed.

The most heretical point that the tantrists make is that an enlightened soul can remain fully involved in the world. He can act as he pleases without piling up further karma that will have to be dissipated in yet another life.

He does not become attached because there is no one there to become attached. He is God-realized; he never abandons his state of union with All with Shiva.

He will accept all as pure and without problem because they are part of the whole, part of Shiva and that makes them holy.

Carried to extremes the tantric idea of accepting the libidinal urges and acting on them to make them holy can result into a slide into crime, insanity, drug abuse or spiritual vacuity.

There are three methods of approaching secret knowledge depending on the three types of human beings. The Sattva are holy spiritual beings, the divya are heroic action figures and the pashu whose lives are made up of boring routines.

The spiritual man can omit external ritual. He already understands that the forbidden wine, food, sex are symbolic of ecstasy, self-sacrifice, the illusion created by the five senses.

To this person the magical gestures of ritual are natural expressions of doing the appropriate thing at the time. Sexual intercourse is symbolic of the union of disparate parts, thought and action, spirit and soul.

The holy person therefore does not need sexual ritual to convert sexuality, for they are already open to the cosmos.

The hero has left fear behind but maintained virtue. Because he isn't wise, he doesn't understand social conditioning or the cultural modeling of reality. In order to understand he must experience concrete references.

He confronts the taboo aspects of existence and then accepts them and integrates them into the whole. To these people the taboos are the five M's of drinking wine, eating fish, eating meat, taking on magic postures and engaging in sexual intercourse.

The common man is still striving for survival and the satisfaction of his needs. The experience of the taboos will confuse him or cause addiction. The tantric ritual is modified.

Coconut milk stands for wine, white beans stand for meat, radishes stand for fish, sprinkling roasted seeds is the magical gesture and submission at the feet of a statue of the Goddess is the equivalent of sexual intercourse.

This is as effective as the other methods because the archetypes, the gods dwelling in his soul are responsive to these actions.

There are many books published in the west on tantric sexual postures. This is the result of the confusion between the sexes in the west.

Shiva worship is practiced at sunrise, noon, and sunset. Monday Shiva is closest to his followers. The Hindus observe the double month of waning and waxing moon.

The night of the thirteenth and the day of the fourteenth day of the waxing moon is most auspicious for Shiva devotions. Each day is dedicated to a particular deity aspect.

The fourth day of waxing moon is Ganesha's. The eighth day is Durga's and so on. Each day is a meditative stage toward the realization of Shiva.

The soul is God's garden. The flowers used to honour the lingam are a sign of what is growing in the soul. They must be fresh, produced by the individual's own hand. One mustn't smell their fragrance.

Every flower has a meaningful purpose and time to be offered. White blossoms are offered to achieve peace, red give strength and energy, dark ones help raise the dark desires. Each month has a prescribed plant.

May/June is lotus blossoms. The wood apple tree is often planted next to Shiva's shrines. It has a threefold leaf, a symbol of the triune good, universe. An oath sworn on the leaf is like one sworn on a bible.

In India psychedelic plan drugs are available for those who have renounced the world and the elderly who are preparing their souls for death.

Hemp, bhang, ganja, and datura or Jimeson weed may be smoked, eaten in sweets or drunk in milk or rose water.

## **Lord Shiva of Yoga Meditation**

### **Shiva Gayathri Mantra**

Shiva the name of the Lord is a mantra. The meaning of Shiva is "One Who is all Bliss and the giver of happiness to all." Lord Shiva is considered as one of the Trinity of Hindu pantheon (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva). He is the supreme God in the Saiva religion (one among the six cults or religion or Shanmatha established by Adi Sankaracharya) or Saiva Siddhanta tradition of Hinduism. His name is referred as Rudra in Rig veda. 'Although classically applied to the

Absolute Brahman, Shiva can also refer to God (Ishwara) in His aspect of Dissolver and Liberator (often mistakenly thought of as "destroyer")'.

The icon Shiva Lina is considered as the abstract form of Lord Shiva. Another icon Nataraja represent Him as Lord of Dance. The Moola Mantra of Lord Shiva is Om Namashivaya. It is known as 'Panchaksharam' of five letter mantra. It forms exactly the central part of Sri Rudram and Sri Rudram forms the centre part of Yajur Veda.

Shiva Gayathri Mantra Hindi Lyrics. Chanting the mantra Om Tat Purushaya Vidmahe helps to overcome all kind of problems and illuminate the mind. Below is the Hindi lyrics of Lord Shiva Gayathri.

**श्री शिव गायत्री मन्त्र**

**ॐ तत्पुरुषाय विद्महे  
महादेवाय धीमहि  
तन्नो रुद्रः प्रचोदयात् ॥**

**Om Tat Purushaya Vidmahe  
Mahadevaya Dhimahi  
Tanno Rudra Prachodayat**

### **Meaning in English**

Om Let me meditate on the great Purusha,  
Oh, greatest God, give me higher intellect,  
and let God Rudra illuminate my mind.

### **Saguna Meditation**

Saguna meditation is meditation on a form. An archer first aims at a gross, big object. Then he takes up a medium object. Finally, he shoots at very small and minute objects. Even so, one should take to Saguna meditation to start with, and when the mind is trained and disciplined well, he can have Nirakara, Nirguna meditation. Saguna meditation is meditation on a concrete object. Saguna meditation is peculiarly pleasing the Bhakta, who loves to gaze on the peculiar form of his Ishta. Saguna Upasana removes Vikshepa. For three or six months, practise Trataka on Shiva's picture.

Meditate on the mental picture of the Murti from half to two hours only in the Trikuti (space between the eyebrows). See and feel that the Lord is present in every object of the universe. When you meditate, mentally repeat the Mantra of the Devata, 'Om Namah Shivaya'; think of the attributes of the Deity such as omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience. Feel that Sattvic qualities from the Ishtam flow towards you. Feel that you possess these Sattvic qualities. This is Sattvic or Suddha Bhavana. You will have Darsana of your Ishtam in one or two years, if you are sincere in your Sadhana. Follow this plan. This will help concentration. Move the mind on the various parts of the Murti, the picture or idol of Lord Shiva, and meditate. Sit upon your usual Asana. Repeat His name and think of His attributes like bliss, radiance, love, etc., gazing at His picture all the while. Then enthrone Him in the lotus of your heart or between your eyebrows amidst a blazing light. Now mentally think of His lotus-feet, offering your devout salutations. Take the mind to the elephant-skin worn round the waist, then to the necklace of Rudraksha beads, adorning His chest, and the beautiful blue hue of His throat (Nilakantha), serene countenance, radiating the majestic aura of profound meditations, the indrawn half-closed meditative eyes, the mysterious third eye in the centre of the forehead. Next take the mind up to the matted locks, the cool crescent moon, and the sacred Ganga sprouting from the Jata. Rotate your mind on the trident (Trisula) in one hand, and then, the Damaru, in the other. Run your mind over the whole form till you complete all the details. Then fix your mind either on the face or upon the starting point (feet). Repeat the entire process again and again, as many times as you can. By constant practice, you will ultimately be established in meditation and have communion with Shiva.

## **Nirguna Meditation**

This is meditation on Lord Shiva, in His all-pervasive, unmanifested aspect, as the Supreme Para Brahman. In this form of meditation, you meditate on Lord Shiva as the Supreme Brahman without form, attributeless, eternal, infinite. Meditate on Him as the Suddha, Satchidananda, Vyapaka Atman; Nitya, Suddha, Siddha, Buddha, Mukta, eternally free Brahman; an unlimited Ocean of Pure Consciousness. Now, identify yourself with this transcendental Svarupa of Shiva. Feel that you are Chaitanya, Akhanda, Paripurna, Ekarasa, Santa, Unchanging Existence.

Every atom, every molecule, every nerve, vein, artery, should powerfully vibrate with these ideas. Lip-repetition of 'Sivoham' will not produce much benefit. It should be through heart, head and soul. This feeling should be kept up continuously. Negate the body-idea while repeating Sivoham mentally.

When you chant Sivoham feel:

Infinity I am  
All light I am  
All joy I am  
All glory I am  
All power I am  
All knowledge I  
All Ananda I am Sivoham Sivoham

Sivoham Sivoham  
Sivoham Sivoham  
Sivoham Sivoham  
Sivoham Sivoham  
Sivoham Sivoham  
Sivoham Sivoham

Meditate on the above ideas constantly. Constant effort with zeal and enthusiasm, is an indispensable requisite. Repeat mentally the above ideas incessantly. You will come to self-realisation.





## Lord Shiva and Snakes

Lord Shiva and Snakes share a curious connection with each other. In almost all depiction of Lord Shiva and his accompaniments, there is always a serpent seen wound around his neck. Along with his Trishul and Dumru, the serpent is a constant companion of Lord Shiva. This serpent is supposed to be the King of Serpents- Vasuki. So is the serpent only a symbol of the Lord having consumed the Halahal poison to save the world? Or is there more to it than that?

As we know that religions evolve over time and are built around the realities experienced by the communities it serve. In other words, sociologically speaking, religions are a direct product produced by a community for their own consumption, constitutive and representative of the collective subconscious. Lord Shiva and Serpents come together in one iconography signifying the syncretism of Shaivism and local folk deities. The Puranic stories have integrated the races of Gods, Danavs, Manavs, Gandharvas and Nagas. Different stories exist that talk of the ways in which each of these communities came to be. In the case of the Nagas, one of the stories say that they are said to be descendants of Rishi Kashayapa and Kadru. The folk culture of worshipping the serpents were slowly but steadily, absorbed by the Brahmanical mainstream.

The Padma Puran traces the connection between the folk and the mainstream by a story of Shiva and the Serpents. It is said that once Shiva was out on one of his ascetic tours outside Kailash and found himself in a forest of Lotuses. In that forest he was overtaken by a sudden lust and his semen found their way onto some of the forest. A Serpent Queen was in the spot and she fell pregnant with a child. The Queen was the mother of the Serpent King Vasuki. When the child was born to the Queen Mother, the child was adopted by Vasuki as his own sister. She was named Manasha and came to share dominion over the snake races with her brother. It was however Manasha's ardent desire to worshipped as a Goddess. Given her semi-divine origins however, she found it difficult to find followers and worshippers. One day when Lord Shiva consumed the deadly poison Halahal to save the world from its wrath, Manasha attended on him and healed him back to health. This deed got her recognition and the title of being Vishahara (remover of poisons). Shiva found himself attracted to his saviour but Manasha managed to assert the fact that she was in fact Lord Shiva's daughter.

Upon learning this, Lord Shiva took Manasha to Kailash. His wife Partvati assumed Manasha was a consort of Lord Shiva and decided to be highly cruel to her. During one of their spats, it is said Parvati had taken her fierce Chandi form and blinded one of Manasha's eyes. Furious, Manasha aimed her toxic gaze upon Chandi and rendered her unconscious. Lord Shiva was deeply pained by this constant strife in Kailash and decided one day to take Manasha back to the



forest. He left her under a tree and was grief-stricken at having to act thus. He used his tears to create a companion for Manasha who was named “Neto” or “Neta”.

With Neto by her side Manasha embarked upon her journey to get worshippers. To her followers she was known to be extremely kind but those that did not accept her divinity, she was wrathful. In one specific example, there was a merchant named “Chand Saudagar” who was a devout follower of Shiva and Durga. He refused to follow or worship the cult of Manasha. The more he resisted, the more adamant Manasa became to have him as a devotee. She sank his trading ships at sea with tidal storms. He would have managed to escape it due to the intervention of Durga, but on Shiva’s insistence she stood back and Manasha got her way. Chand Saudagar was washed to shore however and found an old friend named Chandraketu, who tried to convince Saudagar to worship Manasha to no avail.

Having lost all his fortune and despite being faced with such adversity, Saudagar still refused to worship Manasha. At which point the Goddess solicited the help of two Apsaras, who agreed to be born as children to Saudagar and his business associate Saha. Saudagar’s little daughter was called Behula and Saha’s son was known as Lakshminder. In due course of time the two fell in love and got married even though Lakshminder was fated to die of snakebite on his wedding night. Saudagar tried to make their bedchambers impervious to snakes but Manasha managed to get one of her serpents to enter, that struck down Lakshminder. Behula prayed desperately to Manasha even as the dead body decomposed on the raft generally floated for all victims of snake bite, with the hope of magical recovery. When the raft reached the village where Neta lived, she took pity on Behula and took her to Manasha. The Goddess promised a new life to Lakshminder if Behula could manage to get Saudagar to worship her. Behula agreed and Lakshminder breathed again. Delirious with joy, Behula narrated the whole episode to her father. Convinced of Manasha’s divinity Saudagar finally agreed to worship Goddess Manasha.

Manasha’s struggle to attain divinity makes her appear as a ruthless Goddess, with her mind bent only on self aggrandisement. One must remember however that the position of worship granted to Manasha who was clearly a folk Goddess into the Hindu pantheon, would not have been an easy one. The fact that the Brahmin classes finally agreed on such a sensitive topic show us the influence the folk culture has on mainstream culture. People of Bengal, who lived close to the river Ganges and in the semi-tropical rain-forested area would regularly come across snakes – a species that is vital to the sustenance of the ecosystem. To get them to worship Lord Shiva, was a tough challenge but perhaps the brilliance of the Machiavellian leaders of the time must be acknowledged in their ability to share religious power. This is a classic example of how the

metropolitan centres of power managed to co-opt a regional power to establish hegemonic control.

The end result may be one where Manasha emerges as a slightly maligned Goddess but the acceptance of popular beliefs have led people to be tolerant and eco-friendly, bringing more and more people within the fold of spiritually harmonious existence. That is precisely where the connection between Lord Shiva and Serpents gain credence and relevance even in a contemporary globalised world, peopled by multicultural communities.



## **Mysticism in Ancient India**

In ancient India the early Yogis were a group of mystics and scientists to whom the relationship between a mortal man and an immortal spirit was of great interest. They set about to find ways and means of uniting these two during the earthly life of man. They spent not decades but centuries in making their experiments with different methods of concentration, meditation and relaxation; with various breathing processes, postures and foods. When they finally succeeded in their experiments, they systematized the result of their findings and called it the science of Yoga. The aim of Yoga is to achieve reintegration of the individual consciousness with the cosmic consciousness.

The patron of yoga and meditation, Lord Shiva is considered by the followers of the Hindu religion as the main deity. Shiva is believed to be the guiding force behind all the creations, destructions and regenerations taking place in the world. His existence is beyond all the boundaries all the cultures. He is the only one who exists in various forms. He is that cosmic consciousness that cannot be defined and whose essence is formless. He has often been seen in many images

like dancer, Meditator, the karma Yogi and ego sacrifices. He is the one who shows us the right path even in the worst of times and provides joy and serenity. Shiva meditation is one very effective technique of awakening your inner self and freeing yourself from all the boundaries of life. It is of paramount importance to all of us to learn to chant mantra, breath and visualise Shiva while practicing Shiva meditation.

Lord Shiva, among the great deities of Hinduism, most personifies the practice of yoga. As Yogeshwar, the Great Lord of Yoga, he rules over all aspects of yoga relative to body, mind and consciousness.

Shiva is the lord of asana practice with 84 lakhs of asanas said to have derived from his movements. As Nataraj, the lord of the dance, his dance and gestures also reflect yoga postures.

Lord Shiva symbolises the immortal Prana, the undying force of eternal existence. He is honoured as Mrityunjaya, the one who conquers death. Tantric yoga teachings about Prana relate to Shiva, who holds the inner power of pranayama.

## **Essence of Shiva Meditation**

It is a proven fact that we all are the children of Lord Shiva and we have found our existence from a tiny part that came from him. Like him all of us have a third eye somewhere inside which is also the eye that helps awaken us and enlightens our path. The master of our life, Lord Shiva is an incarnation of mediation in the real sense and so learning to meditate on Lord Shiva clears the darkness from your eyes and enables us to take the best decisions in our life's affairs.



## **Technique of Doing Shiva Meditation**

### **Select a Proper Place**

Though it is highly recommended to select a place which is free from various disturbances nevertheless if you live at a place where noise and disturbances cannot be avoided then you can turn on some soothing music which can enhance the strength of meditation. Turn off all the gadgets and keep yourself away from your phone.

### **Stretch Your Body**

Before starting to meditate, stretch your body so as to keep your body tension free. Take time to stretch your back, hips, legs, neck and shoulder. It will make you ready for meditation. Personally, I am using the Surya Namaskar Yoga technique. As an old man of 78 of age, I have all my reasons to use a chair which is tolerated.

### **Sit Comfortably and Breathe**

It is not always required to sit in a crossed-leg position. Do so only if you are comfortable with the position. You may also sit on a chair bracing your back by the side of a wall if you feel comfortable. It is a myth that meditation can only be done if you sit in a crossed-leg position.

### **Visualize the Image of Shiva and See him as the Winner**

Visualise Lord Shiva as the divine power extending his never ending power to your soul and body.

### **A method: Chant the Mantra “Om Namah Shivaya” while meditating**

While you meditate, keep chanting the Om Namah Shivaya mantra with its definite understanding. When you chant any divine mantra you ought to experience that divinity within yourself and it is spontaneous and effortless.



## **Lord Shiva in Deep Meditation**

Lord Shiva is the Ultimate Reality. He is both Yogeshwara (Supreme deity of all yoga paths) and Yogishwara, i.e. the Master and teacher of all Great yogis(yoga practitioners/Masters). So, we all meditate on him. In Kundalini Yoga, we merge with Lord Shiva by the help of his consort, Mother Kundalini (Shridevi Parvati).

Generally, in any Lord Shiva's picture, we see him in a sitting posture engrossed in deep meditation. This is somewhat puzzling! Correct?

### **Whom does the Lord Shiva meditate upon?**

It is both amusing and intriguing question indeed! Short answer: Lord Shiva meditates upon himself. Now, let us delve into greater depths.

Lord Shiva is the full and complete Ultimate Reality himself. There is no need to meditate on anybody else! In other words, he is always happy and contented being himself. So, he doesn't have to do anything to seek happiness anywhere outside.

Everything resides within him. So, there is no object of meditation. He is the one and only subject. There is no external object. Here is another interesting question:

### **“Lord Shiva meditates on himself”. But, why?**

The supreme bliss (ananda) is the essential nature of Lord Shiva, who is also the Universal Self. It is the Lord's nature to dwell in his own bliss. According to Scriptures Shaiva agamas, Lord Shiva is static and his dynamic power is Devi Parvathi. So, he sits and meditates. He carries out various activities through his power, i.e. Devi Parvati.



## **What mantra (sacred phrase) Lord Shiva could be chanting?**

Simple! Lord Shiva may contemplate on Shivoam (I am Shiva) or Soham (He is I) mantra.

How? It is common sense! Just ponder for a moment. Since he is Shiva, he can as well say “I am Shiva”! Moreover, because he is the Universal Self (that force which is beyond and above everything), he may even chant “He is I”. This means “I am He, who controls everything viz. the Ultimate Reality”.

Sounds interesting, right? But, think about it a bit deeply. If you dig deeper, it becomes very clear that Shiva does not chant anything! Simply because he dwells in pure bliss, where there is no chanting, no mantra or no other second thing. He resides in pure non-dual himself. He is the only One. There is no other one!

## **What about his consort Parvati? It should be two (Shiva and Parvati), correct?**

In reality, however, there is only one Shiva. How? Since, Shiva is always one with Parvati, Shridevi Parvati is nothing but Shiva. Thus, it proves that Shiva is only One.

## **What are the esoteric teachings of Lord Shiva’s meditation?**

He is the Supreme Yoga Master(Guru) . So, he is called yogishwara, the Master of all yogis(yoga practitioners). He is the goal and the Lord of yoga (yogeshwara). He is always in asamprajnata samadhi (subjective meditation) abiding within himself. In this state, there is – “I am the only One” feeling which is beyond all dualities(“two/the other” feeling). There is no thinking such as as: “I am different”, “I and other one” etc.

So, by his meditative pose, Lord Shiva conveys the great advaita (non-duality) philosophy, i.e. myself is not different from the Universal Self. Another teaching by Shiva’s meditation is that we have to meditate upon our own Individual Self with the feeling Shivoam (i.e. “My real me, i.e. Individual Self is Shiva”) to become Shiva!

What a profound message of Lord Shiva’s meditation!



## More about Shiva Yoga of Meditation

Shiva-yoga is a technique of opening the third eye. The third eye is an enigmatic organ having a universal mythological history. It is the middle eye of Shiva; it is the eye of Horus of Egyptian tradition, it is the horn of the unicorn. The third eye is an organ apparently dormant but innately acquired by mankind whose awakening is the birth right of every individual. It is an organ of inner vision which embraces eternity, while the two physical eyes look before seeing neither the past nor the future.

In Yoga-Shastra the pineal gland is spoken of as the third eye, the function of which takes place through the middle of the forehead. This third eye or the pineal gland is atrophied in man; the whole process of Shiva-yoga is directed to the awakening of this dormant pineal gland. It is a rudimentary organ in most people but it is evolving though slowly. It is possible to quicken its evolution into a condition in which it can perform its function of apprehending events comprehensively to give personal access to wisdom. (The word "Shāstra" derives from the Sanskrit root  $\sqrt{s\bar{a}s}$ , which means "scientific knowledge, book, treatise, teachings, instruction, direction, advice, any instrument of teaching, or compendium of rules.")

Yoga is one of the most important Shastras. The word yoga means union. Yoga is the Sastra of uniting individual consciousness with cosmic consciousness. It combines metaphysical world view and Consciousness Studies with methods to achieve this.

Yoga is a broad term, and is used differently in different contexts. This brings a bit of confusion about what yoga actually is. In general yoga is union; however it is used to refer to any exalted state. Bhakti, jnana and karma, the three-fold pursuit of salvation are also referred to as yoga's. However they remain paths or rather approaches, and do not come under yoga Sastra. Technically the word "yoga" refers to yoga Sastra. The different methods of yoga are methods rather than approaches.

The methods of Yoga Sastra are based on Yoga Darsana of Patanjali, according to which binding (bandha) of individual soul (jiva) is because of mistaking intellect (buddhi) for self (atma). However self is beyond all upadhis – body (sareera), senses (indryia), mind (manas), intellect (buddhi), memory (citta) and ego (ahankara). And it cannot be reached through any of these. Only in unalloyed self-conscious state can the being be united with the cosmic Being. The only way is to dissolve the physical and mental consciousness in consciousness of self. Yoga Sastra specifies methods for attaining this.

Yoga defines Samadhi, the state where the seeker, sought and the process of seeking merge into one single continuum and no separation remains between them. When applied to worship, this translates as "the state where there is no difference between the devotee, God and worship". If this is to be expressed in non-theological terminology, it translates as "the state in which mind dissolves in self-consciousness, the being experiences himself as the unalloyed self, and clearly distinguishes self from other faculties of consciousness".

While the objective of yoga remains the same, different upadhis and methods are used to achieve the objective. Based on this diversity, yoga comes to be known in three forms. The goal of all these remains the same. The three major forms of Yoga are: Laya yoga, Mantra yoga and Kundalini yoga. They are not exclusive, but overlapping methods.

Meditation aims at the reintegration of the self. It is a kind of in-gathering and collecting. It induces the stillness of all mental activities which leads the aspirant to the silence which is the source and condition of all activities. The inspiration comes from within the soul but from above conceptual reason. In meditation the mind may be fixed on the inner light or on the heart of the illumined soul or on any divine form or name that appeals to one as good. Meditation is not a swoon but an act of close attention. There we visualize the supreme with all our total being. Meditation involves a process of abstraction by which we get behind the physical, vital and mental layers and reach the inner self. "To attain the Good, we must ascend the highest state and fixing our gaze thereon, lay aside the garments we donned when descending here below". Thereby we sink into the measureless Being that is without limitation or determination.



In meditation an attempt is made to trace the origin of thought. Thought is the subtle form of word or speech. When we speak, words are audible to the ear; if we do not speak the words become inaudible to the organ of hearing. Thus thought is a subtle form of sound, and sound has four stages, namely, Vaikhari; Madhyama, Pashyanti and Para. Vaikhari or the spoken word is audible while the remaining three are inaudible. The process of thinking starts from the deepest level of consciousness, that is, from Para and becomes grosser as it develops. Eventually it becomes gross enough to be sensed on the surface level of consciousness. A thought starts from the depths of mind as a bubble starts from the bottom of the lake. Any thought on the surface level is consciously appreciated. If there were a way to consciously appreciate all the stages of thought prior to the reaching the surface level, that would be the way to transcend thought and experience. That way is the way of meditation. The transcendent being or God really transcends all the name, form and function. An attempt to describe the real form of God will prove futile. It is impossible for anyone to assert that God is exactly like this and unlike any other thing. The highest flight of imagination of the greatest philosophers fails to catch even the fringe of Reality. Yet whatever be the form through which the aspirant invokes the Supreme, will be accepted by Him and in turn He will bestow upon the aspirant, the knowledge of His own real form and nature. There are many forms of meditation and the aspirant has to make his own choice from among them according to his own taste, condition and convenience. But he should constantly bear in mind that God who is the ultimate truth, is one and the same. And it is that one and the same Reality who allows himself to be realized through a variety of names and forms.

It is necessary for the practicing to know the conditions of place, time and posture in which meditation should be performed. The place may be his own home but it should be clean and pure, with sweet and fragrant flowers or agarbatti and with pictures of saints and sages drawn in beautiful features and colours. The suitable time for meditation is the early morning, for the mind remains calm at that time. But it is not advisable to meditate just after a full meal or after heavy exertion. Meditation before taking food is always easy and effective. The seat should be neither too high nor too low and should consist of a blanket or a wooden plank with a white clean cloth over it. The sadhaka or the practisant in padmasana should sit on it with his face turned either towards the East or towards the North. Lotus pose gives the mind an easy stimulus to concentrate. In the initial stage the period of meditation should not exceed the limit of fifteen minutes and it should be gradually lengthened till it reaches the duration of three hours. Sometimes and for some sadhakas an hour's meditation is sufficient. During meditation the trunk, neck and head of the body should be kept straight and the spine unbending and erect. When the sadhaka sits for meditation his mind does not all at once fall silent. So long as the mind is not

wholly absorbed in the object of meditation and the physical or phenomenal consciousness is awake and thoughts of worldly objects come and cross and crowd the mind, the sadhaka should devote himself to the repetition of Om. Before he begins to practice meditation in right earnest, he should perform Dirgha Pranvanu-sadhana, that is, he should do the deep and loud chanting of Om for five minutes. This generates favourable vibrations which set the mind at rest giving it a fillip to ingather. Then he should begin to meditate on his chosen ideal and at the time of meditation, the eyes should be closed.

Now a few forms of meditation will be dealt with in a general way – The heart is the seat of the psychic being which is in the form of light known as Tejas. Imagine a steady, clear and effulgent speck of light in the centre of the heart and meditate upon it. The sadhaka cannot visualize all at once the speck of steady light, when he begins to meditate on the heart centre with his eyes closed; the immediate result is darkness, a restless darkness – it is a painful night. If, however, he refuses to be drawn out, the turmoil settles down, the darkness begins to thin and wear away. Then comes the stage of restful darkness but it is still darkness. The outer lights are gone and the inner light is not yet visible. But the true seeker goes through and comes out triumphant, for darkness in the end disappears and the seeker steps out of the night, enters into the deeper layer of the heart and stands face to face to the inner light – the very image of the self. Oh! ye the seeker gather all the strings of dispersed consciousness, roll them up and rush into the heart and there in its deep quietude you will find the joyful jet of light.

Meditation on Om (AUM) in the centre of the eye-brows should be practiced. Om is called the seed from which the tree of Veda or knowledge has sprung up. This only means that intuitive knowledge wells out from within by the constant repetition of Om with an attention on its meaning. The seeker should chant the Om in all his sincerity. While the lips and throat repeat it physically, the mind should reflect upon it intently and the heart should feel it profoundly. Thus the three fold intonation of Om removes the veil of darkness and reveals the glory of self. The Upanishad is eloquent on the greatness and efficacy of OM. Om is described not merely as the means of meditation but the goal to be reached by the meditation itself. It is the supreme, the supreme support. Thus Om stands for both the means and the end of spiritual life. “The mystic symbol Om is the bow; the arrow is the soul; Brahman is the mark to be pierced. We should penetrate it with one-pointed attention, so that the arrow may become one with the mark.” See how the unitary state of consciousness is achieved by the meditation of AUM (Om). It is a strange but happy thing to know that the sun himself, we are told, travels the universe, singing the symbol AUM (Om). Finally, the moral efficacy of meditation on Om is brought into bold relief in this saying : Just as a snake is relieved of its slough similarly is the man who meditates on Om

relieved of his sins, and by power of his chants is lifted to the highest world where he beholds the person who informs the body, and who stands supreme above any living complex whatsoever.”

Meditation on the space in the crown centre leads one to the realization of an impersonal and universal divine. The seeker should reflect that space within the pot and the space in the room are not different. Similarly, the space within the room and the space outside the room are not different. It is in eternal space that all the rooms have been constructed and it is in one such room that the pot has been placed. It is the same space which permeates all those places and the smallness and largeness of space observed in the pot and in the room are nothing but an appearance. If the space in the pot transcends its limitations and establishes its identity with the outside space which is, in fact, its eternal form, then it will be realized that everything is an imposition on the space which is all pervading. Moreover, it will be discovered that the material and instrumental causes underlying the construction of both the room and the pot are apparent and not real. Following this train of reflection, the seeker should eliminate the I or the ego-sense and identify it with the larger I or the universal self which conditions the world of appearance.

Meditation on breathing also constitutes an exercise. Normally, breathing goes on automatically and unconsciously through the action of the sympathetic nervous system. The seeker should become conscious of the course of breathing and focus his attention on the inhalations and exhalations without any conscious effort at Kumbhaka or retention of breath, and develop the habit of counting them gradually up to thousand. He may otherwise adopt the method of counting the inhalations and exhalations for exactly one hour. The exercise of counting the number of breathing is a psychological device for turning the mind inward. When the mind thus becomes introvert to a certain extent, the seeker then should take up the breathing process with colour consciousness. While inhaling the breath imagine that five coloured rays of light are entering the body from outside, while exhaling imagine that rays of a similar kind are going out from the body and spreading themselves in the outer space. The five colours are red, violet, green, blue and yellow. These five cosmic colours have their points of contact with the five sense organs of man. Meditation on the breathing process makes the sense organs accurate and sensitive.

Crystal gazing is also one of the methods of meditation. There is nothing at all magical in gazing crystals; they are merely instruments. Just as a microscope or telescope can bring invisible objects view by using natural laws, so can a gazing crystal. It merely serves as a means for the invisible or the third eye, the opening of which enables one to penetrate any person’s subconscious mind, and retain the memory of facts gleaned. There is a variety of crystal-gazing. Some persons work with a rock crystal, others prefer a ball of glass, yet others use a bowl of

water or a pure black disc. No matter what they use, the principles involved are the same. Istalinga is also a sort of crystal. It is made of light grey stone and is coated all over with a fine durable paste made of certain ingredients. Istalinga is supposed to be a representation of God and is worshipped daily once or twice. Linga is placed on the palm of the left hand so raised as to come in a line with the centre of the eye-brows. Behind the back just above the shoulder an oil-fed lamp should be placed in the niche, so that the light of the lamp is reflected in the coating of the Linga. With half closed eyes the devotee should fix his attention upon that Linga, the coating of which is blue-black or indigo serving to widen and deepen concentration. The concentrate gaze generates psychic heat which stirs into activity the dormant pineal gland. The flowering out of the pineal gland which is supposed to be the relic of the third eye, confers upon the seeker the clairvoyance.

Meditation on the attributes of God or on qualities like love, forgiveness and non-violence is also practiced. By meditation on these the mind gets suffused by moral and spiritual fervour. God exists because man exists. There is no God but man; man knows God in proportion as he knows himself. Man is neither a bundle of nerves and muscles nor a stream of sensations and impressions, but he is a concrete person, a real individual who is evidenced by the presence of I. All experience, whether cognitive, conative or affective, is an experience to the I which is implicit in all awareness. The implicit I in all awareness is not something inferred by reasoning but something immediately lived and known by experience. What is immediately known is apprehended as unique, as a formal and a material distinction – a distinction of Ahamta and Parahamta; a distinction of soul and oversoul. This oversoul goes by the name of God. If man is a concrete individual, then God is the most unique individual. The relation between the individual and the universal, between man and God is to be established not without but within one's own consciousness. In establishing this relationship prayer and meditation help us to a great extent. Because God is the unique individual, he is therefore the repository of innumerable attributes such as Love, Knowledge, Power, Bliss, Beauty, Unity etc. It is not given for the human intellect to comprehend them all at once stretch. Hence it abstracts some of them and by this mode of abstraction it becomes able to concentrate upon one or other of the attributes. Since the whole of God cannot be grasped by the human mind, it is therefore no weakness, if meditation is directed to some definite or well-defined attributes of God. Meditation is to fix the mind on a definite attribute of the Divine, lest the vagrant mind goes uninhabited and hence un-energized for securing a desired object.

Seek not the self in the man-made temples, churches or mosques, but see it in the grandeur of the universe, in the solitude of thy heart, in the nature's features of exquisite beauty. See it in the blazing Sun, in the blue sky, in the murmuring

river, in the majestic mountain, in the blooming flower, in the burning fire. Tune thy mind with nature's rhythmic music to stimulate thy inner music of the soul which is infinitely superior to the music of the spheres. The inner self is the sweet musician who is ever weaving the discords, deftly into the great masterpiece of the universe. Learn thou to hear the voice of the silence, the soundless sound. The voice of silence is the voice of the inner self. Sitting alone on a plane ground beneath the canopy of the azure sky, studded with the twinkling stars and the lovely moon, enjoy the soft breeze that blows on the face creating a happy lull in the mind that turns wild passion into mild peace. It is only when the mind is silenced, the sense are controlled and the heart takes delight in the nature's joyous rides, that the voice of the self is heard. There is no music grander than the music of silent communion with the inner self. Self is the light that burns in the heart without wick and oil. It is a light that can never be blown out by any gush of wind. To see this inner light requires a mind disciplined by a life of self-abnegation and active altruism, cleansed and curbed by daily prayer and meditation.

It is the pure heart and not proud head, the inner illumination and not the outer intellect that can reveal this light. Yearn ye O seeker, to hear the music of the self-resounding and reverberating through the corridor of eternity. The voice of silence thrills and enthralls thee when thou are in deep communion with thy inner self. The world is deafened by useless words – words of insipid advice, words of false hopes and fond illusions, words of cheap propaganda and chary slogans. Not garrulous speech but a grave silence is the need of the day. The 20th century has made many contributions to the modern civilization. Of all these, the contribution of the noise is the supreme. It ranges from the hearth to the heaven, from the interior span to the interstellar space. I urge upon you to observe silence at least one day a week. It is very helpful for self-introspection. Man must needs to turn away from the world of noise into the inward stillness, into the interior silence, to become aware of the Reality which transcends time and space. The present condition of the world is diseased. The word of God cannot be heard in the world today.



## **Teaching of Yoga Meditation Today**

Yoga has much to offer to you. It teaches you how to breathe correctly, correct breathing refreshes you both in body and mind. It teaches you how to relax completely, complete relaxation restores your vitality. It teaches you how to practise Asanas which, if properly done, protect you against cold, fever, constipation, headache and other troubles. It teaches you what to eat and what not to eat and judicious eating preserves your health. It teaches you how to meditate and meticulous meditation keeps your mind calm, collected and well balanced. Finally, it teaches you what to do in order to remain younger and live longer, regardless of your calendar age. Man's deep yearning for eternal youth is as old as the race. Goethe immortalized it in his Faust who bartered away his soul to Mephistopheles for the gift of undying youth. Goethe's masterpiece touches a sympathetic cord in all, for there is a Faust in every one of us. Years of patient research and tons of gold bars have been spent by mankind throughout the ages, in its attempt to find a way to perpetuate youth and prolong the span of life. High priests and alchemists of ancient times as well as scientists and surgeons in our days have all been and still are engaged in the pursuit of discovering the mysterious fount of youth. So far the secret still eludes the grasp and the best we have been able to do is to create an illusion of youth through mechanical aids – false teeth, dyed hair, face-lift. But the real problem remains unsolved. Only the Yoga science has been able to achieve definite results in preserving the vigour and youth of the body.

Yoga is a system of physical, mental and spiritual training. It originated in India thousands of years ago. It is not a cult nor a creed but it is a method of self-realization which starts with the purification of the body and ends with the unfoldment of the spirit. A Yogi is neither a priest nor an oracle but a man who has attained spiritual illumination. He can be a Hindu, a Christian, a Buddhist, a

Hebrew, a Muslim or he may belong to no religion. In ancient India the early Yogis were a group of mystics and scientists to whom the relationship between the mortal man and the immortal spirit was of great interest. They set about to find ways and means of uniting these two during the earthly life of man. They spent not decades but centuries in making their experiments with different methods of concentration, meditation and relaxation; with various breathing processes, postures and foods. When they finally succeeded in their experiments, they systematized the result of their findings and called it the science of Yoga. The aim of Yoga is to achieve reintegration of the individual consciousness with the cosmic consciousness. Yoga pays particular care and attention to the purification of the body. It is often asked, why Yoga bestows so much attention on the body, when its aim is the spiritual union with the Divine. Yoga regards the body as a vehicle through which the spirit manifests itself. Just as a violinist takes care of his violin without which he would not be able to express his art, so a Yogi takes care of his body as the only instrument through which he can express his spiritual powers. To keep the body fit and free of disease, it needs a certain amount of fresh air, rest and exercise. Why does the body need exercise? Because without exercise the body loses its elasticity and youthfulness, grows stiff and heavy, accumulates fat and toxins and rapidly gets old and worn out. Of course there are a number of exercises such as games, sports, walking, riding, swimming, dancing etc.

Every form of exercise is good to a certain extent, but the ideal form of exercise is the practice of Yoga Asanas. They tone up the activities of the brain, glands, nerves, tissues and cells. They are both curative and recuperative in action. They are designed to bring the body into a condition where the healing forces of nature are able to do their work. The first step to gain the stability of the body is to practise the Asanas. There are a number of Asanas and tradition speaks of 84 Asanas.

One need not master all of them, but at least 12 of them are to be mastered. They are : 1) Shirshasan, 2) Sarvangasana, 3) Halasana, 4) Paschimothanasana, 5) Matsyasana, 6) Yogamudrasana, 7) Simhasana, 8) Bhujangasana, 9) Shalabhasana, 10) Dhanurasana, 11) Ardha-Matsyendrasana and 12) Shavasana.

Begin with Shirsasana and end with Shavasana. In Shavasana or corpse-pose, the whole body is relaxed. The hard floor is better for relaxation than a soft couch. The Yogis realized that no spiritual illumination could be attained by a person whose mind is restless and whose muscles are tense and rigid. A completely relaxed muscle discharge very little electricity. When the body is relaxed and the mind is at rest there is almost no dissipation of life-energy or Prana. From the observation of the behaviour of various animals, the Yogis found that cat serves as the best example of relaxation. Watch a cat and see how it stretches and yawns and how limp its body becomes when it rests. If you try to

lift it up, it will hang lifelessly from your hand like a wet bath-towel. When you are tired and need a rest, try to imitate the cat and just lie relaxed on the carpet.

### **Some general instructions about the Asanas:**

1. Yogasanas should be performed early in the morning in a well ventilated room.
2. The bowels must be cleared before starting the Asanas. It is not desirable to bathe immediately after the Asanas are performed; but a bath can be taken just before starting the Asanas.
3. The Asanas must always be done bare footed on a carpet or rug spread out on a hard and even surface. Clothing should be as light and loose as possible.
4. The beginners should practise simple Asanas, through practice the rest can be mastered.
5. For beginners 30 seconds should suffice for maintaining a particular Asana. Gradually the duration should be increased.
6. Throughout the performance of the Asanas breathing should be normal.

We do not pay any serious attention to breathing, the most important of all our bodily functions. It has never occurred to many of us that a great deal of our physical and mental troubles are due to the fact that we do not breathe correctly. Life and breath are synonymous. We live as long as we breathe. We start our life with the first breath and end it with the last breath. We never stop breathing whether we are awake or asleep. We can exist without food for weeks and without water for few days but without air we cannot exist even for a few minutes. Air is the most important nourishment for our blood. All the activities of the body from digestion to creative thinking depend upon the oxygen supply through breathing; yet we treat breathing with utter indifference. If there is a deficiency in the supply of oxygen, the process of ionization will be incomplete and the food is partially assimilated. Nearly 50 percent of delinquency in minors is due to oxygen starvation which is the result of shallow breathing and lack of fresh air. The habit of shallow breathing is one of many unnatural habits that modern civilization has forced upon us. It has been proved that in the civilized world only babies breathe in a natural way. In order to enjoy good health a person needs approximately 60 deep breaths in a day. Shallow breathing is directly or indirectly responsible for a number of physical and mental diseases ranging from nervous disorders to common cold. To function properly the brain requires three times more oxygen than the rest of the body. If it does not get its due allotment, it extracts it from the body supply. That is why brainworkers often possess a poor physic and bad health. Deep breathing not only nourishes



the whole system but also cleanses it. We pay a dear price for having forgotten that we are an integral part of nature. In spite of all our inventions and achievements in the field of mechanics, we are not mere machines. If we are really anxious to keep physically fit and mentally alert, we should begin to re-educate ourselves in the ways of living as taught by Yoga.

Prana is not mere breath but it is cosmic energy. It is a life-giving principle which pervades the whole atmosphere. It is manifested in every form of existence – organic and inorganic. By breathing exercises it is possible to raise the degree of circulation of Prana in the body. The surplus of Prana is stored in the solar plexus which is the battery of the human body. We breathe better during night when we are asleep. The breath of a sleeping man is much deeper and is often accompanied by a mild, hissing sound. We must remember that we breathe through the pores of our skin, hence light cloths are to be worn at bed time. The process of breathing is much more wide-spread than we generally suppose. We are told that the creation of the world began when the Creator breathed upon the waters. It has been proved that plants and metals also breathe. Astronomers tell us that even the sun breathes regularly, each breath taking eleven years and causing at its fullness the appearance of the sun's spots upon the surface.

Man must contain a definite amount of air to counteract the law of gravitation which pulls him to the earth. At sea level the pressure is about 16 pounds per square inch. This must be equalized by the intake of air. That is why the lungs never empty all the air they contain. Their total capacity is said to be 250 cubic inches but they only empty 150 so that there always remains 100 cubic inches of air within them. To cleanse and refresh lungs, prolonged exhalation or Rechaka is the most efficacious.

## **How to Meditate on Lord Shiva**

Lord Shiva is one of the principal deities in Hinduism we like to repeat, and is known as the patron of meditation and yoga. Regarded as the master of destruction, creation, and regeneration, Shiva can be thought of as beyond duality and form. While in essence he is formless and undefined cosmic consciousness, he can also be visualized as many incarnations or images. These include the meditator, the blessing (the karma yogi), the ego sacrificer, and the dancer. Meditating on Shiva by visualizing his manifestations and chanting mantras dedicated to him is a way of bowing to your own truest inner self and of awakening the third eye. Learn how to embrace your inner divinity and meditate on Shiva through breathing, visualizations, and by chanting mantras.



## **First Part**

### **Starting you meditation**

#### **1. Prepare yourself and your space for meditation**

Turn off your television and your cell phone, and eliminate other external distractions. Use a space in which you feel comfortable and free from the need to complete tasks and other stressors. Set aside designated time to meditate, preferably between twenty minutes and a couple hours, depending on your abilities and preferences.

- Wear comfortable clothes that are suitable for your space's temperature. You'll want to avoid being distracted by stiff clothing or by being too hot or too cold.
- Don't allow birds chirping, cars driving by, and other unavoidable external sounds to interrupt your meditation. Being aware of the world and its interconnections can actually be beneficial to meditation.
- However, if you live in a location, such as by a subway stop or train track, where noise is dominating your thoughts, you should consider putting on music or a mantra recording, both of which are available on YouTube and other services.

The goal of meditation is to focus and quiet your mind, eventually reaching a higher level of awareness and inner calm. It may come as a surprise to learn that you can meditate anywhere and at any time, allowing yourself to access a sense of tranquillity and peace no matter what's going on around you. This article will introduce you to the basics of meditation, enabling you to begin your journey on the path of enlightenment and bliss.

## **2. Stretch your body.**

To eliminate stiffness and tension in your body as you sit still to meditate, you should stretch yourself out before beginning. Take a few minutes before meditating to stretch your legs, hips, back, shoulders, and neck.

- While sitting, hold your legs out straight in front of you and reach for your toes to stretch your calves and hamstrings.
- Bend your knees while seated and bring the soles of your feet together to stretch your hips and quadriceps.

## **3. Sit in a comfortable position.**

Typically, one sits in a seated, cross-legged position when they meditate. Do so only if it's comfortable for you to sit cross-legged for an extended period of time, and hold your back upright, unbowed but not unnaturally straight. However, consider sitting in a chair or with your back braced by a wall or other object if you are unable to sit cross-legged without discomfort.

- Remember it's important to wear comfortable clothes that allow you to sit still for a while.
- You will want to avoid distractions from tension or stiffness in your body. Especially if you are just beginning to practice meditation, it is most important to find a distraction-free, comfortable body position.
- Sit on a yoga mat, a cushion, or on folded blankets or towels for more comfort.

## **4. Establish your breathing.**

Begin your meditation with controlled breathing techniques. Be conscious of your breathing and use each breath you take to focus your intention. Breathe in slowly as you count to four, hold for four, and exhale for four. Let your awareness on your breath help you clear your mind and focus your concentration.

- As you inhale, consider light flowing through your essence, as life rises through your vertebrae and fills you.

- Imagine the energy-filled center at the point where your in-breath fuses with your out-breath.
- As you exhale and your breath is out completely, visualize a universal pause in which your particular Self vanishes and focus on your interconnectedness with everything around you.



## Part Two

### 1. Visualizing Images of Shiva

Visualize Shiva as the Winner. Begin to concentrate on images of Shiva to guide your meditation. Envision Shiva as the victorious Yogi. Hold your hands in fists near your head. Shake them and think of a goal or intention. Say or think to yourself, "I am a winner. I reach my goal. My goal is," and name your goal.

- A goal or intention could be to succeed at a particular task or difficulty, like finding the motivation to complete a project, or improving a relationship with a friend or family member.
- Your goal could be more general, like being more present at work or when interacting with others, or being more honest and direct with yourself.

### 2. See the strong Shiva.

Envision and become the strong Shiva with your next visualization. While sitting cross-legged, rub your feet on the ground. Visualize yourself high on the peaks of Mount Meru. Say or think to yourself, "I am sitting on the Mount Meru. I maintain equanimity in pain. I'm going with perseverance my way."

•Mount Meru is a mythical, five-peaked sacred mountain in Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. It is also the name of a Himalayan mountain located in northern India.

### **3. Envision the egoless Shiva and become egoless.**

Make large circles with your hands around your body. Visualize the universe, cosmos, stars, and their interconnectedness. Say or think, "I live in the great system of the cosmos. I take things the way they are."

### **4. Meditate on Shiva the Hatha Yogi.**

Visualize within yourself the Kundalini Serpent. Envision your latent or primal power within your core. Twist your spine, move your toes and imagine the Kundalini uncoiling from your lower spine to your head. Say or think to yourself, "I am a Hatha Yogi. I save myself with my spiritual exercises."

- The Kundalini is your primal energy or latent power, thought of as a coiled serpent to be awakened. It rises from the base of your spine as it is awakened through meditation, chanting, yoga, and other spiritual practices.

### **5. Visualize Shiva the Karma-Yogi.**

Envision and become Shiva the Good, who works for a happy world. Extend your hand with an upward- and outward-facing palm. Focus on your good intentions, and send all beings light. Say out loud or think, "I send light" and say a specific name or intention, or say to all things. Say, "May all beings be happy. May the world be happy."

## **Part Three**

### **Chanting mantras**

#### **1. Understand the power of sound.**

When chanting a mantra or uttering the name of a deity as a mantra, you are in effect merging with that deity's being. When you utter a divine name, you experience the divine within yourself. You should treat any mantra with respect, and speak it with full understanding of its meaning.





## **2. Meditate on Shiva the Master Yogi.**

Hold your palms together at your chest in front of your heart chakra. Visualize the sky above you. Say, "Om all enlightened Masters. Om inner wisdom. Please guide and help on my way."

- “Om” or "Aum" is the sacred sound associated with the vibration of the cosmos. It is that which sustains everything that is.
- In order to enunciate the "Ah" sound, first open your mouth wide and imagine the universe's creative moment coursing through your body from deep within you, as if the Om were speaking you, rather than you speaking the sound.
- Then, begin to purse the lips and stretch the sound into its latter component, the "Mmm," which also has a slight "ng" aspect to its pronunciation. Touch the roof of your mouth with your tongue as you speak the final syllables to symbolize the closing of the process of creation.

## **3. Chant the mantra, “Om Namah Shivaya.”**

Concentrating on a picture or a statue of Shiva is helpful while chanting this mantra. Move one hand outward and take the energy from Shiva. Say out loud

or think to yourself the mantra, “Om Namah Shivaya,” a Sanskrit mantra that means “I bow to Shiva” or “I connect myself with Shiva.”

- Use a mantra recording to help guide your chanting, or play it prior to meditating to assist you with proper pronunciation.
- Say and repeat “Shivo Ham,” or “I am Shiva,” and feel how the energy of Shiva flows with the mantra through you.

#### **4. Conclude your meditation.**

Put your hands in your lap and move your toes around. Say out loud or think to yourself the mantra, “Om Shanti. Om Peace,” repeating the mantra for at least a minute. Utter it from your belly and feel its vibration emanating from within you. Stop chanting and just sit for some time with your mind clear of thoughts.

Keeping your spine is straight and your belly relaxed, just sit without thinking for some time.

- Breathe slowly, but without awareness of your breaths, and relax.
- As you allow thoughts to return, envision yourself as Shiva the Dancer. Think positively as you complete your meditation, envisioning light and blessings to continue with you.



## **Isha Kriya – A Powerful Guided Meditation**

Rooted in the timeless wisdom of the yogic sciences, Isha Kriya is a simple yet potent process created by yogi and mystic, Sadhguru. Isha Kriya is free, simple, and easy to practice. Available as a guided meditation with an instructional video and downloadable instructions, as well as through live classroom sessions, it has the potential to transform the life of anyone who is willing to invest just twelve minutes a day.

“Isha” refers to that which is the source of creation; “kriya” literally means “internal action.” The purpose of Isha Kriya is to help an individual get in touch with the source of his existence, to create life according to his own wish and vision. Daily practice of Isha Kriya brings health, dynamism, peace and wellbeing. It is a powerful tool to cope with the hectic pace of modern life.

Today, for most people, the word “yoga” usually conjures up images of twisting the body into impossible postures. The physical aspect of yoga is only one facet of this multi-dimensional science. Yoga is a technology to bring the body and mind to the peak of their capabilities – allowing one to live life to the fullest.

It is the vision of Sadhguru to offer “one drop of spirituality” to every individual. Through the Isha Kriya guided meditation, the possibilities of a spiritual process, which were once available only to yogis and ascetics, are now being offered to every human being in the comfort of their own home.

### **Meditation and the Mind**

The mind does not like meditation because if you keep the body still, the mind will also naturally become still. This is why so much stress has been laid in yoga on hatha yoga and asanas. If you just learn how to keep your body absolutely still, then your mind will also become still. I want you to just observe yourself and see how many unnecessary movements your body makes when you stand, sit or speak. If you look at your life, you will see that more than half the time is taken up in these things that you yourself don't care for.

If you keep the body still, the mind will slowly start collapsing and the mind knows that it will become enslaved if it allows this. The main aspect of meditation is, right now your mind is the boss and you are the slave. As you meditate and become more meditative, you will become the boss and your mind will become the slave and that is how it should always be. If you don't know how to keep the mind as a slave, it will put you through all kinds of endless suffering. If you allow the mind to rule, it is a terrible master. But as a slave, the mind is wonderful – it is a miraculous slave.



## **Transcending the Physical**

"Meditation" or "Dhyana" means to go beyond the limitations of the physical body and the mind. Only when you transcend the limited perspective of the body and the mind do you have a complete dimension of life within you.

When you are identified as the body, your whole life is only about survival. Your whole perspective of life will be simply survival. When you are identified as the mind, your whole perspective is enslaved to the social perspective, to the religious perspective, to the family perspective. You can't look beyond that. Only when you become free from the modifications of your own mind will you know the dimension of the beyond. Can you see that this body and this mind are not yours? It is something that you have accumulated over a period of time. Your body is just a heap of food you have eaten; your mind is just a heap of impressions you have gathered from the outside.

What you have accumulated you handled well, it is your property. Like your home and your bank balance, you have a body and a mind. You have a good bank balance, a good body and a good mind. Good! This is needed to live a good life. But it is not sufficient. It is not fulfilling yet. No human being will ever be fulfilled by these things. They will only make his life comfortable and conducive. Especially if you see Western society, everything that you are dreaming of, every average citizen has. But do you think they are fulfilled, that they are blissful? Definitely not! Nowhere near bliss. So Dhyana is to transcend the limitations of body and mind, and you begin to experience yourself in a much deeper dimension.

Your instruments, body and mind are okay to live in this world for survival. But life will not be fulfilled with them. And if you don't know who you are, are you capable of knowing what the world is? If you want to know the true quality of who you are, only if you transcend the limitations of your body and mind can there be a possibility for you to experience it. Yoga and Dhyana are scientific tools, which help you to transcend the limitations of your body and mind and experience the true quality of who you are.

Without experiencing this, just eating, sleeping, reproducing and dying, your life will not be fulfilled with these. All those things are needed in your life. But our life is not complete because of these, even if you have fulfilled all these fully. This is because the quality of a human being has crossed a certain boundary of awareness. It has to seek something more, otherwise it will never be satisfied. It has to become unlimited. So Dhyana or meditation is a way of moving into the unlimited dimension of who you are.

# **The Isha Kriya Meditation Technique**

## **Preparation**

- Sit in a cross-legged posture with your eyes closed, facing East.
- Keep your hands open, palms facing up, with a slightly upturned face.
- Keep a mild focus between your eyebrows.

## **The Meditation**

This meditation will happen in three stages:

### **Stage One**

Inhale and exhale gently, slowly. With each inhalation, mentally say to yourself: “I am not the body” and inhale for the whole duration of that thought.

With each exhalation, mentally say to yourself: “I am not even the mind” and exhale for the whole duration of that thought.

Do this for 7 to 11 minutes.

### **Stage Two**

Utter the sound “AAA” with mouth open. The sound should be coming from just below the navel. You need not utter it very loud, but enough to feel the vibration.

Utter the sound 7 times, exhaling fully into each sound.

### **Stage Three**

Sit for 5 to 6 minutes with your head slightly upturned, and focus between your eyebrows.

The total time is between 12 to 18 min.

You can sit longer if you want.

### **Important to note**

- While you sit for Isha Kriya, do not participate in the activity of the mind or body. Whatever is happening in your body or your mind, just ignore it and simply sit there.
- Do not take a break during the practice or it will disturb the reorganization of energies that will be in process.

- Anyone can practice this kriya and enjoy its benefits. Simply follow the instructions without making any changes. This is a simple but very potent kriya.
- You can remind yourself about this:  
(I am not the body, I am not even the mind) anytime during the day.
- Each time you do the kriya you must do it for a minimum of 12 minutes, and twice a day for 48 days, (considered as a full mandala or cycle) or once a day, for 90 days.

This is your commitment. This is your

## **Questions:**

### **What can I possibly gain out of this?**

Where is the need to meditate, first of all? Starting the process of life was not your conscious choice, it “happened” to you. When you were born your body was so small, and now it has grown. So obviously, the body is something that you gathered. It is an accumulation. What you call as “my body” is an accumulation of food. Similarly, what you call as “my mind” is an accumulation of impressions.

Whatever you accumulate can be yours, but it can never be you. The very fact you accumulated it means that you gathered it from somewhere else. Today you could gather a 70 kg body, but you can decide to make it a 60 kg of body. You don’t go looking for those 10kgs, because they were an accumulation. Once you drop it, it is gone. Similarly, with your mind, it is an accumulation of impressions.

The moment you are identified in your experience, the moment you are identified with something that you are not, your perception goes completely haywire. You cannot perceive life the way it is; your perception is hugely distorted. So the moment you start experiencing this body, which you gathered from outside, as “myself,” the moment you start experiencing the impressions that you have in your mind as “myself,” you cannot perceive life the way it is. You will only perceive life the way it is necessary for your survival, and not the way it really is.

Yet once you have come as a human being, survival is very important, but it is not enough. If you had come here like any other creature on this planet, stomach full - life would be settled. But once you come here as a human being, life does not end with survival. Actually, for a human being, life begins only after survival is fulfilled.

So meditation gives you an experience, an inner state where what is you and what is yours is separated. There is a little distance, there is a little space between what is you and what you have accumulated. For now we can understand this as meditation.

### **What is the use of doing this?**

It brings an absolute clarity of perception. You see life just the way it is. No distortions about it; simply seeing life just the way it is. Right now if we see this very hall as a world, your ability to go through this world is only to the extent that you clearly see it. If I have no clarity of vision but if I have confidence and if I try to go through this, I'm going to be a bumbling idiot. Whenever there is no perception, people try to overcome that by building confidence in them. Without the clarity of perception people are trying to make it up with other kinds of substitutes; there is no substitute for clarity.

Once you understand this you naturally become meditative; you want to clear up everything and just look at life the way it is, because you want to walk through life with least amount of friction, without stumbling on this or that.

### **Why should my head be slightly upturned?**

Sitting with your head slightly upturned is not because you want to see something floating in the sky or imagine something. You keep your head upturned because when your system "looks" upward it becomes receptive. It is like opening a window. This is about becoming receptive to Grace. When you become willing and receptive, your body naturally arches up.

### **What does this meditation do?**

This Kriya will create a certain space between you and your body, between you and your mind. If at all there is any struggle in your life, it is because you identify yourself with these limited aspects of yourself.

So the essence of meditation is that it creates a space, a distance between you and what you refer to as your „mind“. All the suffering you go through is manufactured in your mind, isn't it so? If you distance yourself from the mind, can there be suffering in you? This is the end of suffering.

Now while you are meditating, there is a distance between you and your mind, and you do feel peaceful. The problem is that the moment you open your eyes, you are again stuck with your mind.

If you meditate every day, a day will come when you open your eyes, and you can still experience that the mind is there and you are here. This is the end of suffering. When you are no longer identified with your body and mind, you will

be in touch with the source of Creation within you. Once this happens, Grace happens.

Whether you are here, or beyond, this is the end of suffering. That means your whole karmic bag – your past or unconscious mind – has been kept aside. It cannot have any influence over you. Once the past has no influence over you, then life becomes a huge potential.

Every breath becomes such a tremendous possibility in your life, because the past is not playing any role in your existence here now. If you sit here, you are absolute life. Life becomes effortless.

### **What is the importance of the breath?**

Is there more to breathing well than being healthy?

Breath is the thread which ties you to the body. If I take away your breath, your body will fall apart. It is the breath that has tied you to the body. What you call as your body and what you call as “me” have been tied together with breath. And this breath decides many aspects of who you are right now.

For different levels of thought and emotion that you go through, your breath takes on different types of patterns. If you are angry you will be breathing one way. You are peaceful, you breathe another way. You are happy, you breathe another way. You are sad, you will breathe another way. Have you noticed this?

Based on this conversely is the science of pranayama and Kriya: by consciously breathing in a particular way, the very way you think, feel, understand and experience life can be changed.

This breath can be used in so many ways as a tool to do other things with the body and the mind. You will see with the Isha Kriya, we are using a simple process of breath, but the Kriya itself is not in the breath. Breath is just a tool. Breath is an induction, but what happens is not about the breath.

Whichever way you breathe, that is the way you think. Whichever way you think, that is the way you breathe. Your whole life, your whole unconscious mind is written into your breath. If you just read your breath, your past, present and future is written there, in the way you breathe.

Once you realize this, life becomes very different. It needs to be known experientially; it is not something you can propound like this. If you know the bliss of simply sitting here, the blissfulness of just being able to simply sit here, not think anything, not do anything, simply sit here, just being life, then life would be very different.

In a way, what this means is today there is scientific proof that without taking a drop of alcohol, without taking any substance you can simply sit here and get drugged or stoned or drunk by yourself. If you are aware in a certain way, you can activate the system in such a way that if you sit here it is an enormous pleasure. Once simply sitting and breathing is such a great pleasure you will become very genial, flexible, wonderful because all the time you are in a great state within yourself. No hangover. Mind becomes sharper than ever before.

### **What effect does uttering the sound “AAA” have on me?**

When you utter the sound “AAA,” the maintenance centre in your body gets activated. This is Manipuraka chakra, or the navel centre. Manipuraka is just three-fourths of an inch below your navel. When you were in your mother’s womb, the “maintenance” pipe was connected there. Now the tube is gone, but the maintenance centre is still in your navel.

Now as there is a physical body, there is a whole energy body that we generally refer to as either prana or Shakti. This energy, or prana, flows through the body in certain established patterns; it is not moving randomly. There are 72,000 different ways in which it moves. In other words, there are 72,000 pathways in the system through which it is flowing. So nadis are pathways or channels in the system. They don’t have a physical manifestation; if you cut the body and look inside, you won’t find these nadis. But as you become more and more aware, you will notice the energy is not moving at random, it is moving in established pathways.

When you utter the sound “AAA,” you will see the reverberation will start about three-fourths of an inch below the navel and spread right across the body. Sound “AAA” is the only reverberation which spreads right across the body because this is the only place where the 72,000 nadis meet and redistribute themselves. They all meet at Manipuraka and redistribute themselves. This is the only point in the body like that. If you utter the sound “AAA,” the reverberations of this sound are carried right across the system.

This reverberation can assist greatly in energizing your maintenance centre. Activating this centre will bring health, dynamism, prosperity and wellbeing.



## **Shaivite Yoga Traditions**

Many great yoga traditions arise from Shiva and honour him as their original guru. Most Himalayan sadhus are Shaivites. Shaivite Yoga includes the Nath traditions that form the main teachings of Hatha Yoga and Siddha Yoga. In Vedic times, Shiva was lauded as Rudra along with the Maruts, his wandering sages, and with great Rishis like Vasishtha. Shiva Yogis maintain a special sacred fire in honour of this Vedic heritage.

Shaivite yoga in the Mahabharata is called Pashupata Yoga. The image of Shiva as Pashupati or the lord of the animals, with a three-headed form, is the most enduring image in Indian art, found as early as the Harappan era. Shiva represents the eternal presence of yoga behind the dharmic culture of India.

Shiva's numerous shrines throughout India hold many yogic powers, from Kailas and Manasarovar in the north to Rameshwaram in the south, including the famous 12 Jyotir Lingas from Somnath to Kashi Vishwanath. A steady stream of pilgrims attends these sanctuaries regularly today as they have for thousands of years. The Kumbha Mela, the world's largest religious gathering, provides a centre stage to his worship extending to tens of millions of devotees.

## **Why is the Lord Shiva the most mysterious among all Hindu Deities**

### **Part One**

Of all the deities in the Hindu pantheon, by far the most complex and mysterious to me is Śiva. Devotees and scholars alike have attempted to pierce the shrouds of textual and archaeological history to understand his origin, nature and evolution. Yet he continues to defy comprehension and definition. Some, following John Marshall, have sought him in the phallic emblems, baetyls, seals and sculptures of the Indus Valley Civilisation. Others like Doris Srinivasan place his origins firmly in the early Vedic fold, and in the Vedic deity Rudra. Still others like Phyllis Granoff point to the textual and iconographic chasm between the Vedic Rudra and the classical Śiva, indicating a need for serious contemplation and research to understand how, if indeed they are one and the same deity, the transition and transformation came about.

Rudra's nature from the early Vedic to the late Vedic period embodies continuities and differences. We find that his benign aspect increasing gradually while his destructive aspect declines, though remains. Rudra of the Ṛgveda is a minor deity, a storm god with just three hymns dedicated to him: 1.114, 2.33 and 6.46. (He appears along with Soma in 1.43 and 6.74). His dual nature is already evident. Prone to anger and quick to dispatch weapons especially arrows against those who enrage him, he is also a deity with healing remedies and a provider of good luck. He is the flame-red boar of heaven, youthful with braided hair, powerful lips, merciful hands, tender-hearted and easy to invoke. Father of the Maruts, dazzling like the bright sun, powerful like a wild beast, swift, with the destructive power of lightning, storm and fire, he is lord of the sacrifice, of song and the physician of physicians. One of the adjectives used for him is indeed śiva (auspicious), but not exclusively. It is used for Agni and Indra and is also the name of a people in the Ṛgveda (7.18.7) The classical iconography (candra, Gaṅgā, liṅga) so familiar to us today is completely absent.

By the time of the composition of the Yajurveda saṁhitas, Rudra has grown tremendously in stature. His importance and physical appearance in the minds of



the ṛṣis has changed. Now he is clad in skin, dwells in the mountains, is aged and has a thousand eyes. Ambika is mentioned for the first time in the Vedic corpus at this stage, not as his wife, but as his sister. In what J Bruce Long calls the "embodiment of divine ambivalence", both the auspicious (śiva) as well as malevolent (rudra) aspects are developed in the renowned Śatarudriya prayer which occurs in the kṛṣṇa Yajurveda and with some modification in the śukla Yajurveda. From being a minor atmospheric deity in the Ṛg saṃhita, he has become Viśvarūpa and his presence can be felt in streams, ponds, banks, on the road, on barren land, in the cow pen, in the heart the whirlpool, in the dust and mist.

Now addressed as Nīlagrīva, Śitikanṭha, Giriśaya (mountain dweller), Viṣāpaharaṇa (one on whom the deadliest poison has no effect), and Paśupati, he is the lord of the forests, trees, fields and plants. In the Śatarudriya is also evident his all-inclusive divinity which is extended to wanderers, thieves, tricksters, robbers and pilferers. His Rudras/gaṇapatis are the lords of carpenters, potters, blacksmiths, fishermen, hunters and the Niṣādas, a non-Vedic tribe. While the Śatarudriya becomes a central text in the worship of the Purāṇic Śiva centuries later, there are just as many features that are unfamiliar (as are familiar) to the devotee who reads it for the first time. For instance, Rudra as Rathapati (lord of chariots), Harikeśa (one who has green hair/green leaves as hair), Kūpya (of the well) and Avatya (of the pit/hole).

The Atharvaveda represents a further stage of elevation for the Vedic Rudra. Book XV of this saṃhita identifies him with all of creation in a language which is distinctly Vedic but addresses the deity as Eka-vrātya, vrātyas being not of the ārya community. (Read the first few hymns, or the whole book in translation here. He becomes Mahādeva and holds the bow of Indra, erstwhile chief of the Vedic gods. The texts speak of seven attendants of this deity including Bhava, Īśāna, Paśupati, Śarva, Ugra, Rudra and Mahādeva. They are apart, yet a part of him – a theme which Phyllis Granoff takes up in her research on later developments in the persona of Śiva. Rudra/Mahādeva/Eka-Vrātya is fond of strong sura and shares a special relationship with a puṃścalī (a harlot, lit one who goes after men) but also becomes one with all that the ārya hold pure. Varuṇa, Soma and the seven ṛṣis follow him; hymns like rathantara and brihat follow him, as do the ādityas, and viśvedevas. Mahadev Chakravarti posits the theory that Vedic Rudra is not of ārya origin and that the Atharvaveda represents his increased acceptance by the custodians of the ārya belief system.

The brāhmaṇas progress this continual and by now seemingly unstoppable ascent of Rudra. AB Keith says even the gods are afraid of him by this stage. By the time of the composition of the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (see ŚU 6.18) Rudra

has become the one god, the one who creates brahman and bestows the Veda upon him/it. At ŚU 3.2 we encounter a familiar theme: “There is only one Rudra; he has not tolerated a second who would reign over these worlds by his sovereign powers. After drawing in all beings he stands as the protector at the end of time, turning West towards men” Clearly by this period, a cult of Rudra (widely accepted today as a precursor to Śaivism) has been established. Further evidence is to be found in Patañjali’s Mahābhāṣya. Commenting on Pāṇini’s sutra V.2.76, he talks of discreet followers of the deity - Śiva-bhāgavatas, who were āyaḥśūlika (possessing iron spears/lances) and daṇḍājīnaka (holders of a staff and wearing animal skin). Patañjali is dated circa second century BCE, while the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad is thought to have been composed between the sixth and the fourth century BCE.

He remains connected to the Vedic ritual as can be seen in the śrauta and gr̥hya sutras. Over and above that it is recommended that he be adored in practically all walks of life. Śāṅkhāyana gr̥hyasūtra prescribes Rudra worship to sick people. The Pāraskara gr̥hyasūtra directs "adoration" when crossing a path, approaching a cross road, swimming across a river, getting into a boat, entering a forest or climbing a mountain, passing by a burial ground or a cow pen. For Rudra clearly has come to inhabit the universe. The Hiraṇyakeśī gr̥hyasūtra recommends the same if one chances upon a cattle dung heap, is plunged into a river, is near a creeping snake, by a sacrificial site or a big old tree.

So far we have touched upon the trajectory of Rudra in the early and late Vedic texts. As yet there is no consensus as to the origin of this deity. Was he pre-ārya? Was he contemporary but external to the ārya? Was he a mountain or a forest god? A malevolent force of nature? Or was he clearly as ārya as Agni, Vāyu and Soma, as Doris Srinivasan would have us believe? Did he gain all his epithets by absorbing the gods of smaller autochthonous cults? What were the stories that led to his names in the Śatarudriya? We have traversed close to two thousand years of textual history and as yet we haven’t even reached the part where he becomes unequivocally Śiva or Śaṅkara. Hopefully we will get there in Part II of this article, although I must warn you that a lot of questions remain unanswered even today. I urge all to learn Sanskrit, read the Vedic corpus and find your own answers!

## Part Two

In part one of this article on Shiva we touched upon the presence and development of Rudra as he appears in texts before the beginning of the common era. In this article, I'd like to walk you through what might have been the process by which Rudra became Shiva in the millennia that followed.

Scholars like Nilima Chitgopekar and Benjamin Fleming have written extensively on this complex journey. Others like Stella Kramrisch have presented an ahistorical portrayal which makes it difficult to analyse the process.

Indologists agree broadly that by the 4th century CE the epics were in the form as we know them today. In the epics Shiva, though respected, was not yet a major deity. Many of the legends associated with his classic Puranic form are not fully formed. For instance, having combed references in the Mahabharata, Dr Lynn Thomas suggests that his "destroyer" aspect is yet to take exclusive hold. References to destruction, death and the end of creation are diffused and Yama continues to hold a larger share of the antaka (ender, destroyer) aspect.

Other stories associated with Shiva where they do appear are brief and not anywhere as developed as in the Puranas. Phyllis Granoff points to the destruction of the sacrifice of Daksa, the decapitation of Brahma and the decimation of Tripura (three cities) as scant or absent in the epics.

Yet, Kalidasa who is supposed to have lived around the same time, had no trouble at all penning the mahakavya "Kumarasambhava" in which Shiva appears in full Puranic glory, even though explanatory myths are not elaborated (see KS 5.65-81). Why this disconnect? Well, three basic elements underlie the transformation of Rudra to Shiva, in which absolutely central is the role of theologian-redactors who decided when and in what form a deity would be placed in the brahminical texts. Other factors include the absorption of the belief systems of autochthonous groups into the Vedic fold and the inclusion of regional gods, each of whom added their features to the developing deity. This led to the re-casting of references that appear in stem form in early Vedic texts.

Some new aspects that were added to Rudra came naturally to him. For instance asceticism. Rudra/Sarva, the hunter, lived in the forest, rejected the Vedic sacrifice and way of life. He is the god mentioned in the Kesi-sukta (RV 10.136) which enunciates the earliest expression of heterodox, mendicant ways. The transformation to the Mahayogi in the wake of the systemisation of yoga (circa 6th-4th cen BCE) is then easy to comprehend. But what about other features? Here Nilima Chitgopekar's scholarship shows the way. She feels certain characteristics were grafted deliberately onto Rudra in what is now known as the Puranic Process. As the footprint of Aryavarta expanded, the Vedic religion came directly into contact (hegemonically) with other cultures, which had their own gods. These gods were not discarded or rejected, but integrated into the brahminical pantheon with their features.

As the modern states of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka came into the fold, local folk deities were tagged onto Rudra and

their personalities coalesced into the deity we know as Shiva today. Khandoba, Mailara and Mallana are examples. Mahakala was a local deity of Ujjain before he became one with Shiva. Chitgopekar applies Darwin's theory to gods, saying those who were most adaptable, most able to respond to contemporary concerns (like Shiva) survived while others faded into obscurity. Shiva grew in popularity when he was "consortified" and given two sons. However, the synthesis of the old with the new cultures was not always smooth as can be read in the tension between Shiva and Parvati over the place and acceptance of Lord Ganesa.

The erstwhile director of the National Museum C Shivaramamurti, not following this line of thought, focuses on the theoretical space created by early Vedic descriptions. For him the Satarudriya is the vibhuti (power, magnificence) of Shiva's forms, and he sees orthogenetic linkages between Rudra and Shiva. For instance, Kapardi (having braided or knotted hair) is not just retained, but is the source of Jatadhara (possessing matted locks). Ausadhi-pati (lord of herbs) and bhisak (physician) lead in a direct line to Vaidyanatha (lord of physicians). The epithet Urmi (present in, characterised by waves), Phenya (existing in foam) and Avasvanya (present in the flow of the stream/roaring) envision the later Gangadhara. Urvara, (corn crop), and Ksetra-pati (lord of the fields) develop effortlessly into Kedaranatha.

Archaeologist TA Gopinath Rao, who is credited for "discovering" the Gudimallamlinga has a very practical and scientific approach. Following Sayana, he reads Surya/Rudra, as the (sun) god of the Kesi-sukta as and visa (which means both poison and water) referring in its earliest expression to the sun absorbing water from the earth. Later this leads to the myths of the drinking of poison, Vedic epithets like Nilagriva and Visapaharana and eventually to the Puranic myth of kalakuta (poison arising from the churning of the ocean) and the form Nilakantha. While accepting the rich philosophical explanations around it, he is also outspoken in his acceptance of linga as a phallus, saying it is the source of all creation and he cannot understand the squeamishness around worshipping it as such.

Chitgopekar suggests not only are all myths multi-layered but should be read as representing social fusion and tension when two cultures meet. Take for instance the incident in the Pine Forest (Daruvana). The distraught Shiva (in his Bhiksatana form) is roaming naked and the wives of the sages are enamoured by his "beauty". When the sages are angered, he rips his phallus and throws it on the ground, causing chaos, and the linga has to be worshipped to restore peace and order. (In other versions it falls off because of the curse of the sages). Given the utter distaste of the Vedic establishment for worshippers of sisna (phallus)

this could well represent the tension of having to include phallic worship and the eventual inclusion of the linga into brahminical worship.

The Daruvana episode also gives an explanation for other iconographical attributes of Shiva - for instance the tiger skin on which he sits, his elephant hide dripping with blood and the snake(s) that adorns him. Of course it could well be that the snake comes about because he is extolled in Satarudriya as ahimsa ca sarvanjambhayan (controlling all snakes). Similarly, the lingodbhava-murti of Shiva is believed by some scholars to derive from the Skambha-sukta of the Atharvaveda (AV 10.7 and 8).

I would not consider this preliminary exploration as even having scratched the surface when it comes to understanding Shiva. In truth the divine is unknowable, and to try and find his origins is a reckless task. For he is Aja (the unborn) and Anadi (without beginning). But as Chitgopekar asserts, we can certainly work on the etiology of his traits. And as we have begun to see, this is an unbelievably complex process. The interaction between different cultures and belief systems over millennia have produced mythic and divine traits that are not at all easy to isolate.

From my own research work is that despite being on the fringe of the Vedic society (just three suktas in the Rg Veda), from being the leader of the vratyas (one of the Vedic "others" like the dasyus, pulindas, nisadas, kiratas and sabaras), he has forever been a force to reckon with. Dangerous, incredibly powerful and uncontrollable. Just read AV 11.2 to get a sense of how terrified they were of him. Over the millennia and particularly with the Puranic process, the custodians of the brahminical texts have managed to pacify him, make him Sankara (he who pacifies) and Shiva (the auspicious). They have bound him with a household, given him two sons and an equally powerful wife, probably as a counter balance.

Despite all that, his anger simmers just below the surface as Kamadeva found out the hard way. He has always been and continues to be too powerful to ignore. And too hot to handle. Probably why Kalidasa could write about him in the Gupta period, but the authors/redactors of the epics were not ready to give him his due. That recognition comes centuries later, in the Puranas. Next in this series we'll explore the creation of a sacred geography to mainstream Shiva-with the creation of the jyotirlinga matrix.



## How to Worship Lord Shiva

Lord Shiva is worshipped in His Saguna aspect in the form of Shivalingam. Generally Shivabhaktas do Panchayatana Puja. In this Puja, Lord Shiva, Ganesa, Parvati, Suryanarayana and Saligram are duly worshipped.

Get the Panchayatana Murtis on an auspicious day. Install them with great faith in your own house. Conduct special prayers, Archana, Puja, Abhisheka, and feeding of Brahmins, Mahatmas and the poor on a grand scale. Install the deity in a separate room. Worship the Lord daily with all sincerity and faith. You will have all wealth, peace of mind, attainment of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha also. You will lead a prosperous life and enter the Immortal abode of Shiva-Sayujya, on death.

Collect plenty of Bael or Bilva leaves for Lord Shiva's worship. Get ready Dhupa, Dipa, camphor, sandal-sticks, fresh water, plenty of flowers, food offerings to the Lord, a seat to sit upon, a bell, conch and other things required for the Puja before you begin the worship. Get up in the early morning before sunrise. Wash your face. Take bath. Wear silk dress separately kept for Puja purposes. Decorate the Puja room nicely. Enter the room chanting Lord's names, glorifying Him, repeating Hymns in His praise and prostrating before the Lord. Wash your feet before entering the room. Sit in a comfortable posture and commence your worship. You have to first of all do Sankalpa for beginning the Puja in the prescribed method. You should then do Kalasa (water vessel), Sankha (conch), Atma (self) and Pitha (Lord's seat) Puja in their order. You

should then offer Shodasopachara Puja to the Lord and then repeat Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, Rudrapatha, Purushasukta, Gayatri, and do Abhisheka with pure water, milk, sugarcane juice, ghee and other articles according to your capacity or with pure water alone. Rudrabhisheka is highly beneficial. If you do Rudra Japa and Abhisheka, all your worries and agonies will disappear and you will attain the highest beatitude of human existence by the grace of Lord Visvanath. Rudra is a great purifier. There is invisible hidden power in Rudra and Purushasukta. There is a wonderful inspiration in the recitation of Rudra. Start the worship and realise its glory and splendour for yourself.

After Abhisheka, decorate the Lord nicely with sandal paste and flowers. Then do Archana repeating His names, 'Om Shivaya Namah', 'Om Mahesvaraya Namah', etc. Do daily 108 or 1008 Archanas if possible. After Archana, do Arati with different kinds of lights—single Arati, Triple Arati, Pancha Arati and Karpura Arati. Ring bells, cymbals, conch, etc., during Arati. Offer sacred Prasad or Naivedya to the Lord.

After Arati is over, sing the praises of the Lord like Mahimna Stotra, Panchakshara Stotra, etc., waving the Chamara. In the end repeat the prayers 'Kayena vachah', 'Atma tvam Girija matih', and 'Kara-charana-kritam'. Offer everything to the Lord. Feel that you are a mere instrument in His hands. Do everything for obtaining the divine grace only. Develop Nimitta Bhava. Serve the Bhaktas. The Lord is much pleased with the service of His devotees. Distribute the Prasad among the Bhaktas in the end. Take the Prasad with great faith. The glory of Bhagavan's Prasad is indescribable. Vibhuti is taken as Prasad and applied to the forehead.

When you advance in Saguna worship with external objects of worship, you can begin Manasa Puja. You will have Darsana of the Lord and final emancipation.

Have special Pujas on Mondays and Pradosha (thirteenth day of every fortnight—Trayodasi) days. These days and Shivaratri (in the month of February-March) are very sacred for Lord Shiva. Celebrate the Shivaratri on a grand scale. Fast the whole day. Have Trikala Puja, special Abhisheka, Ekadasa-rudra-japa, Sahasrarchana, vigil in the night, study of hymns of Lord Shiva, Shivapurana, hearing discourses on the Lilas of Lord Shiva. After Puja on the next day, break your fast with Abhisheka water. Offer sacred food offerings and partake of the Divine Prasad. You will have great mental peace, and spiritual advancement. Never miss this opportunity. Daily worship is a sure remedy for all ills. You will never suffer from poverty. Take my word and begin the Puja right from this day onwards.

## **Shiva Manasa Puja**

Manasa Puja is mental worship. Manasa Puja is more powerful and effective than the external worship with flowers, sandals, etc. You will have more concentration when you do Manasa Puja.

Mentally enthrone the Lord on a Simhasana, set with diamonds, pearls, emeralds, etc. Offer Him a seat. Offer Arghya, Madhuparka and various sorts of flowers, clothes, etc. Apply sandal paste to His forehead and body. Burn incense and Agarbatti (scented sticks). Wave lights. Burn camphor and do Arati. Offer various kinds of fruits, sweetmeats, Payasa, cocoanut and Mahanaivedyam. Do Shodasa-upachara or the sixteen kinds of offerings in worship.

## **Panchakshara Mantra Writing**

Write down in a fine note book 'Om Namah Shivaya' for half an hour or more. You will have more concentration by taking recourse to this Sadhana. Write the Mantra in ink clearly. When you write the Mantra observe Mouna. You may write the Mantra in any language. Give up looking hither and thither. Repeat the Mantra mentally also when you write the Mantra. Write the whole Mantra at once. When the Mantra notebook is completed, keep it in a box in your meditation room. Be regular in your practice.

Keep a small notebook in your pocket and write Mantra when you get leisure in the office. Have three things in your pocket, viz., the Gita, Mantra notebook and a Japa Mala or rosary. You will be immensely benefited.

## **Shiva Jnanam**

Japa and meditation of the sacred names of Lord Shiva will free you from all sins and lead you to the attainment of Shiva Jnanam or eternal bliss and immortality. Shiva-nama is the very soul of all Mantras.

Lord Shiva has manifested in the world in sixty different aspects. Vrishabharudha, Hari-hara, Nataraja, Bhairava, Dakshinamurti, Ardhanarisvara, Bhikshatana, Somasekharamurti, Urdhvanatana, Kalasamhara, Jalandhara, Surasamhara, Lingodbhava are His forms.

Shiva means that which is eternally happy or auspicious, Parama-mangala. Om and Shiva are one. Mandukya Upanishad says: 'Santam Shivam Advaitam'. Even an outcaste can meditate on the name of Lord Shiva.



Shiva manifests in the Gayatri Mantra, Agni and in the Sun. When you repeat Gayatri and when you worship the Agni and the Sun, you should meditate on Lord Shiva.

Japa of Panchakshara and meditation of Lord Shiva should be particularly done in the Pradosha Kala or just before the sunset. The Pradosha on the thirteenth Tithi after a full moon or a new moon day, is known as the Mahapradosha. The Devas visit Shiva temples for the worship of the Lord at this period. You can worship the Devas also if you visit temples during Mahapradosha. Devotees of Lord Shiva observe full fast on Mahapradosha days.

A devotee of Lord Shiva should apply Vibhuti to his forehead and body. He should wear a Rudrakshamala. He should worship the Shivalinga with leaves of the Bilva tree. He should do Japa and meditation of the Panchakshara 'Om Namah Shivaya'. Lord Shiva is propitiated by every one of these actions. Vibhuti or Bhasma is very sacred. It is worn by Lord Shiva Himself. The bead of a Rudrakshamala represents the third eye on the forehead of Lord Shiva. Bilva leaves are regarded to be one of the five abodes of Lakshmi or the Goddess of wealth.

It is Shiva only who causes bondage and Mukti for the Jivas. It is Shiva who makes the Jivas realise their essential Divine Nature. Shiva made Maya as the body, senses and the Universe and thrust the Jivas into the Maya. He created the idea of egoism, 'I'-ness in them. He bound them in Karma and made them experience pleasure and pain according to the nature of their Karmas, virtuous actions or vicious deeds. This is the stage of bondage of the Jivas.

Gradually it is Shiva only who releases them from the fetters of egoism, Karma and Maya and makes them shine as Shiva. This is the state of Moksha or freedom. It is only through the grace of Lord Shiva, they attain the state of final emancipation.

The Jivas have no independence, when they are under the influence of the three impurities, i.e., Anava, Karma and Maya. They are endowed with a little knowledge (Alpajnana).

The Jiva must first know his nature and his relationship with Lord Shiva in order to attain His grace. Life or Prana is in the body. Lord Shiva is within the Prana. He is the Prana of Pranas, and yet He is distinct from the Pranas and body. If there is no Prana in the body, the body becomes a corpse. It cannot perform any action. Shiva is the support for this body, Prana and Jiva. The Jiva cannot do any action without Shiva. It is Shiva who illumines the intellect. Just as the eye

cannot see without the light of the sun, although it is endowed with the power to see, so also the intellect cannot function without the light of Lord Shiva.

The four Sadhanas, viz., Charya, Kriya, Yoga and Jnana are the four steps to attain Salvation. They are like the bud, flower, unripe fruit and ripe fruit.

Lord Shiva gradually frees the individual souls from egoism, Karma and Maya. The Jivas gradually become disgusted with the sensual pleasures. They become balanced in pleasure and pain. Through the grace of the Lord they understand that Karma is the cause for births and deaths. They begin to do actions for the Lord, serve the devotees of the Lord and attain purity of mind. They understand that the soul or Shiva is distinct from the body, senses and mind and is beyond the reach of mind and speech. They get initiation into the significance of 'Om Namah Shivaya', the Panchakshara Mantra and meditate on Shiva.

They practise Shiva Yoga. Their hearts melt. Seer, sight and seen vanish. All the activities of senses, mind and intellect cease. They bathe Lord Shiva with the stream of Divine Love that is generated in their heart and offer their heart as flower unto the Lord.

They hear the sound 'Chilambosai' and march forward through the path of the sound and behold the vision of Nataraja in the Chidakasa and are immersed in the ocean of Shivananda. They become one with the Lord, just as camphor melts in the fire.

## **Worship of Shiva Linga**

The popular belief is that the Shiva Lingam represents the phallus or the virile organ, the emblem of the generative power or principle in nature. This is not only a serious mistake, but also a grave blunder. In the post-Vedic period, the Linga became symbolical of the generative power of the Lord Shiva. Linga is the differentiating mark. It is certainly not the sex-mark. You will find in the Linga Purana: Pradhanam prakritir yadahur-lingamuttamam; Gandhavarnarasairhinam sabda-sparsadi-varjitam—The foremost Linga which is primary and is devoid of smell, colour, taste, hearing, touch, etc., is spoken of as Prakriti (Nature).

Linga means 'mark', in Sanskrit. It is a symbol which points to an inference. When you see a big flood in a river, you infer that there had been heavy rains the previous day. When you see smoke, you infer that there is fire. This vast world of countless forms is a Linga of the Omnipotent Lord. The Shiva Linga is a symbol of Lord Shiva. When you look at the Linga, your mind is at once elevated and you begin to think of the Lord.

Lord Shiva is really formless. He has no form of his own and yet all forms are His forms. All forms are pervaded by Lord Shiva. Every form is the form or Linga of Lord Shiva.

There is a mysterious power or indescribable Sakti in the Linga, to induce concentration of the mind. Just as the mind is focussed easily in crystal-gazing, so also the mind attains one-pointedness, when it looks at the Linga. That is the reason why the ancient Rishis and the seers of India have prescribed Linga for being installed in the temples of Lord Shiva.

Shiva Linga speaks to you in the unmistakable language of silence: "I am one without a second, I am formless". Pure, pious souls only can understand this language. A curious passionate, impure foreigner of little understanding or intelligence says sarcastically: "Oh, the Hindus worship the phallus or sex organ. They are ignorant people. They have no philosophy". When a foreigner tries to learn Tamil or Hindustani language, he first tries to pick up some vulgar words. This is his curiosity nature. Even so, the curious foreigner tries to find out some defects in the worship of symbol. Linga is only the outward symbol of the formless being, Lord Shiva, who is the indivisible, all-pervading, eternal, auspicious, ever-pure, immortal essence of this vast universe, who is the undying Soul seated in the chambers of your heart, who is your Indweller, innermost Self or Atman, and who is identical with the Supreme Brahman.

A Shiva Linga consists of three parts, the lowest of which is the Brahma-Pitha, the middle one, the Vishnu-Pitha and the uppermost one, the Shiva-Pitha.

Some are Svayambhu-lingas, some are Narmadesvaras. There are twelve Jyotirlingas and five Pancha Bhuta Lingas in India. The twelve Jyotir-lingas are: Kedarnath, Kasi Visvanath, Somanath, Baijnath, Ramesvar, Ghrusnesvar, Bhimasankar, Mahakala, Mallikarjuna, Amalesvar, Nagesvar and Tryambakesvar. The five Pancha Bhuta Lingas are: Kalahastisvar, Jambukesvar, Arunachalesvar, Ekambaresvar of Kanjivaram and Nataraja of Chidambaram. The temple of Lord Mahalinga at Tiruvidaimarudur known also as Madhyarjuna is regarded as the great Shiva temple of South India.

Spatikalinga is also a symbol of Lord Shiva. This is prescribed for Aradhana or worship of Lord Shiva. It is made up of quartz. It has no colour of its own, but takes on the colour of the substances which come in contact with it. It represents the Nirguna Brahman or the attributeless Supreme Self or formless and attributeless Shiva.

For a sincere devotee, the Linga is not a block of stone. It is all radiant Tejas or Chaitanya. The Linga talks to him, makes him shed profuse tears, produces

horripilation and melting of heart, raises him above body-consciousness and helps to commune with the Lord and attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Lord Rama worshipped the Shiva Linga at Ramesvar. Ravana, the learned scholar, worshipped the golden Linga. What a lot of mystic Sakti there should be in the Linga!

May you all attain the formless Shiva through the worship of the Linga, the symbol of Lord Shiva which helps concentration of mind and which serves as a prop for the mind to lean upon in the beginning for the neophytes!

## **Shiva Linga is Chinmaya**

The light of consciousness manifesting out of SadaShiva is, in reality, the Shivalinga. From Him all the moving and unmoving creations take their origin. He is the Linga or cause of everything. In Him, the whole world merges itself finally. The Shiva Purana says: “Pitham Ambamayam Sarvam Shivalingascha Chinmayam.” The support or Pitham of all is Prakriti or Parvati, and Linga is Chinmaya Purusha, the effulgent light which is self-luminous. Union of Prakriti or Parvati, and Purusha or Shivalinga is the cause of the world. In Sanatkumara-samhita of the Shiva Purana, Lord Shiva says: “O Parvati, daughter of mountain, there is none dearer to Me than the man who worships Me in the Linga, knowing that Linga is the root-cause of everything and knowing the world to be Linga-maya or Chaitanya-maya.”

The Linga is like an egg. It represents the Brahmanda (cosmic egg). Whatever that is contained in the Brahmanda is in the Linga. The whole world is the form of Lord Shiva. The world is a Linga. Linga also is the form of Lord Shiva.

Linga signifies that the creation is effected by the union of Prakriti and Purusha. It means Laya, Jnana, Vyapya, Prakasa, Arathaprakasa, Samarthyā and the symbol which denotes the above meaning. Linga means the place of dissolution for the world and all beings. It signifies also Satya, Jnana and Ananta—Truth, knowledge and Infinity. It indicates that Lord Shiva is endowed with all-pervading and self-luminous nature. Linga is a symbol which makes us understand the various kinds of Artha which are indicated above. There are six Lingas, viz., Anda Linga, Pinda Linga, SadaShiva Linga, Atma Linga, Jnana Linga and Shiva Linga. These Lingas are taken to mean the characteristics by which the Anda (the Universe), Pinda (the body), SadaShiva, etc., are to be recognised and understood.

The union of Linga with Yoni is a representation of the Eternal Union between the static and the dynamic aspects of the Absolute Reality. This represents the Eternal Spiritual Communion of the paternal and the maternal principles from

which all the phenomenal diversities have originated. This is an eternal communion of the Changeless Being and the Dynamic Power or Sakti from which all changes flow.

Further, the lower sexual propensities in the aspirants are eradicated by this sublime conception. The spiritualisation and divinisation of Linga and Yoni, helps the aspirants to free themselves from sexual thoughts. All base thoughts gradually vanish by entertaining this lofty idea. All sexual relations in this world are spiritualised as the manifestations of the ultimate Creative Principle, of the eternal Self-enjoyment and Self-multiplication of Lord Shiva in and through His Power or Sakti.

The union of Linga with Yoni symbolises the creation of this universe by Lord Shiva in conjunction with His Sakti or Power.

The so-called educated men of the modern age have no spiritual insight and philosophical penetration. Hence, they criticise the union of Linga with Yoni as immoral and obscene, owing to their extreme ignorance and lack of enquiry, deep thinking and Satsanga or association with sages. This is highly deplorable and lamentable indeed! May Lord grant wisdom to these poor ignorant souls!

## **Way to Attain Lord Shiva**

Tirumular's Tirumantram is a poetical work, said to be composed in the course of three thousand years. It deals with the practical and theoretical aspects of Saiva religion and philosophy. The treatment of Pati (Lord Shiva), Pasu (the individual soul) and Pasa (attachment) in the old method, is found in this book. The following is Tirumular's exposition in his Tirumantram.

God alone is the Guru or the spiritual teacher. He shows Shiva or Sat. Sat-Guru is Ambalam or Chidakasa Shiva. You will have to search the Guru in your own heart. Knowledge, devotion, purity and Siddhis are obtained through the grace of the Guru. The grace descends in virtuous aspirants who have purity, dispassion, etc.

The thirsting aspirant should get help from Guru Param. Guru Param imparts spiritual instructions to the aspirant. Then Suddha Guru confers upon him Divine Grace. When the aspirant obtains the Divine Grace, he gets several powers, purity, the power to know the Mantras, higher Siddhis, etc. Then the Sat-Guru reveals himself in the Chidakasa, breaks the three bonds, viz., Anava (egoism), Karma (action) and Maya (illusion) and helps him to enter the illimitable domain of Moksha or supreme abode of eternal bliss. Shiva Guru presents himself later on and manifests Sat, Asat and Sadasat. When the Jiva

attains this final knowledge, he becomes Shiva himself. The Guru who presents himself in the earlier and later stages, is Shiva himself.

The devotee attains the grace of the Lord when he meditates on Him in the chambers of his heart, in the space between the two eyebrows and in the head. The holy feet of the Lord are highly eulogised. Tirumular says: “The holy feet of my Lord are Mantra, beauty and truth.”

Jneya or that which is to be known, is Shiva Ananda which is a product of Shiva and His grace, Sakti. The Jnata (knower) is the individual soul or Jiva. He knows Shiva by abiding in Shiva Ananda and obtains Jnana or knowledge.

Moksha is the attainment of Shiva Ananda. He who attains Moksha will attain supreme knowledge of Shiva. He who gets established in Shiva Ananda will attain knowledge and Moksha (the final emancipation). The Jiva who knows Shiva Ananda dwells for ever in it. He attains Shiva and Sakti in Shiva Ananda. He is endowed with true knowledge which is really union of Shiva and Sakti. Lord Shiva shows the path which leads on to Moksha, to the aspirant who is endowed with dispassion, non-attachment, renunciation, who praises Him always and performs regular worship.

The devotee of Lord Shiva gets strength to resist the temptations of the world and of Indra, through his Tapas or austerity. He does not care at all for the celestial pleasures offered by Indra. He is quite contented with the supreme bliss attained through union with Lord Shiva.

When the Sadhaka does rigorous austerities and practises concentration, he attains several powers. Indra and other Devas get terribly afraid that they will lose their position. Hence, they put several obstacles on his path and tempt him in a variety of ways by offering celestial car, damsels and various sorts of celestial pleasures. But the firm Sadhaka stands adamant. He never yields and marches direct to the goal, viz., Shiva-Pada or the Immortal seat of eternal Bliss. He who yields gets a downfall. Visvamitra had a downfall.

Sage Tirumular says: “Abandon pride of learning. Introspect. Look within. You will be firmly established in Shiva. Nothing will shake you. You will be freed from the trammels of births and deaths.”

Saiva Siddhanta teaches Advaita only. It is Shiva Advaita.

## **Greatness of the Prasad**

Prasad is that which gives peace. During Kirtan, worship, Puja, Havan and Arati, Badam, Kismis, milk, sweets, fruits are offered to the Lord. Puja is done by Bael leaves, flowers, Tulsi, Vibhuti, and these are given as Prasad, from the Lord. They are charged with mysterious powers by the chanting of Mantras during Puja and Havan.

Prasad is a great purifier. Prasad is a panacea. Prasad is a spiritual elixir. Prasad is the Grace of the Lord. Prasad is an embodiment of Sakti. Prasad is divinity in manifestation. Many sincere aspirants get wonderful experiences from Prasad alone. Many incurable diseases are cured. Prasad energises, vivifies, invigorates and infuses devotion. It should be taken with great faith.

Live for a week in Brindavan, Pandharpur or Banares. You will realise the glory and miraculous effects of Prasad. Prasad bestows good health, long life, peace and prosperity on all. Glory to Prasad, the bestower of peace and bliss. Glory to the Lord of the Prasad. Giver of immortality and undying happiness.

Vibhuti is the Prasad of Lord Shiva, to be applied on the forehead. A small portion can be taken in.

Kumkum is the Prasad of Sri Devi or Sakti, to be applied at the space between the eyebrows (Ajna or Bhrumadhya).

Tulsi is the Prasad of Lord Vishnu, Rama or Krishna, not to be taken in. Badam, Kismis, sweets, fruits, etc., are to be taken in.

All these Prasads are given on all important religious functions.

## **Benefit of Pilgrimage**

You will find a description of Oertel's treatment in books on medicine, for certain cardiac affections (heart-troubles). The patient is asked to climb up hills slowly. So, the Kailasa trip, besides the spiritual benefit, removes many kinds of minor heart-troubles. The heart is invigorated and strengthened. The whole cardiac-vascular, nervous, pulmonary, alimentary, integumentary systems are thoroughly overhauled and purified. There is no necessity for Kuhne's steam bath. You perspire profusely during the march. The whole body is filled with fresh, oxygenated blood. The gentle breeze blowing from the tall pine trees all over, surcharged with natural oil of pine, disinfects the lungs and a consumptive is cured of phthisis when he returns. The excessive fat is reduced. A Kailas trip is the best treatment for reduction of obesity in corpulent persons. Many kinds of

stomach troubles, uric acid troubles and various sorts of skin diseases are cured. You will not get any disease for a period of 12 years, as you are charged with new electrons, new atoms, new cells, new molecules and new nuclei with renovated protoplasm. This is no Arthavada (glorification). You get two birds by throwing one stone. The Kailas trip brings spiritual blessings and good health. Hail! Hail to Sambhu, the Lord Shiva who dwells in Kailas with His Sakti, Parvati, who gives Mukti to His devotees and who is known by the different names, Hara, SadaShiva, Mahadeva, Nataraja, Sankara, etc.

The goal of life is God-realisation which only can free us from the miseries of Samsara, the wheel of birth and death. The performance of the daily obligatory rites, Nitya-Naimittika Karmas, Yatras, etc., unselfishly, leads to the acquisition of virtue. This leads to the destruction of sin, which in turn results in the purification of the mind. This purification of the mind leads to the comprehension of the true nature of Samsara or relative existence, its false and worthless nature. From this results Vairagya (renunciation), which arouses a desire for liberation. From this desire results a vigilant search for its means. From it comes the renunciation of all actions. Thence, the practice of Yoga, which leads to a habitual tendency of the mind to settle in the Atman or Brahman. This results in the knowledge of the meaning of such Sruti passages as 'Tat Tvam Asi', which destroys the Avidya (ignorance), thus leading to the establishment in one's own self. Thus you see that Yatra like Kailas trip is a Parampara Sadhana for God-realisation, as it causes Chitta Suddhi and Nididhyasana. Dhyana is a direct Sadhana. Householders who are shut up in the world amidst various sorts of cares and anxieties, find a great relief in a Yatra. Their minds get quite refreshed by a Yatra. Further, during the travel they come across Sadhus and Sannyasins. They can have good Satsanga. They can clear their doubts. They can get various sorts of help from them in spiritual Sadhana. That is the main object of Yatra.

Let me bring to your memory, once more, the last word of the Vedas, Upanishads—'Tat Tvam Asi', my dear readers. Om Tat Sat, Om Santi, Peace be unto all beings.

## **Benefits of Parikrama**

Parikrama is the devout perambulation or Pradakshina around a sacred and holy spot. This is either a mountain peak, a sacred Tirtha, a place of pilgrimage or an entire area regarded as holy and sanctified by tradition. This practice of making a circuit is ordinarily done at any time, and especially undertaken by devotees en masse at particular periods during the year.



When done on a smaller scale within a small ambit as round a Murti installed in a shrine, round the sacred Tulsi plant or Pipal tree, the perambulation is in common parlance termed 'Pradakshina.' A Parikrama also doubtless constitutes Pradakshina, but by convention, it is come to refer mainly to big circuit.

More difficult forms of Parikrama are in vogue. Additional measures involving greater physical exertion and strain are combined with Parikrama. Some lay themselves fully stretched upon the ground and roll along over the entire route. Some others proceed slowly prostrating full length at every three or ten steps; still others walk step by step, placing one foot in close proximity to the other and cover the whole distance of Parikrama; and others do the circuit themselves gyrating in a continuous Atma-Pradakshina. All these difficult features are adopted by devotees at times as special penance, or in accordance with some vow previously made, or as spontaneous expression of their zeal or fervour. Your mental attitude and motive will bestow on you the highest, maximum spiritual good.

Undaunted Yatris in the icy Himalayas do the difficult Parikrama of Mount Kailas and even longer circuit of Lake Manasarovar. Other Yatris complete a round of entire Uttarakhand, in doing the Kedar-Badri-Yatra by going via one route and returning via another, after circling the Chardham.

Far off in the South, pious devotees make Pradakshina of the holy Arunachala at Tiruvannamalai. Rama Bhaktas and Krishna Premis go round Chitrakuta Parvata, Ayodhya, Brij, Brindavan, Govardhana and Badrinath.

The deep significance of Parikrama lies in the fact that the devotee considers not the physical aspect of the place, hill or Tirtha, but the spiritual power it symbolises and the Divine Presence that is manifested and felt through it. Through the Lord's revelation in the tenth chapter of the Bhagavad-Gita, you will understand how much special places are saturated with the Divine Presence. By the fervent attitude of faith and veneration, you make yourself fully receptive to the inflow of the spiritual vibrations of the holy place. These powerful spiritual currents enter and purify all the sheaths, gross and subtle, destroying bad Vasanas and Samskaras. Tamas and Rajas are reduced. The concentrated influence of Sattva awakens the dormant spiritual tendencies. By Parikrama, the devotee drinks deep the Divine atmosphere pervading the place and comes out of this spiritual path steeped in Sattvic vibrations. This is the inner working and significance of doing Parikrama.

Being a great purifier, it is enjoined on all devotees as a method of penance or Tapascharya by wise tradition and convention. It is an act of great spiritual benefit and religious merit too. The devotee takes bath, wears clean clothes,

smears Tilak or sacred ash and wears Tulsi or Rudraksha Mala and starts with God's name on his lips. On the Parikrama route, you gain valuable Satsanga by meeting Sadhus and Sannyasins living there. Your sins are destroyed by taking bath in sacred rivers (on big Parikramas) or ponds and Kunds. You are elevated and blessed by Darsana of many holy shrines situated on the way. You develop patience and endurance putting up with various discomforts in the sun or rain or cold. Difficult Parikramas mean giving up many dear articles to which the mind is attached. You have your mind freed from all thoughts and you are absorbed in the one idea of the Divine presence. A devoutly conducted Parikrama constitutes in one single act a triple Sadhana elevating your body, mind and spirit. The spiritual vibrations of the holy places of pilgrimage and shrines purify your base Asuric Vrittis and fill you with Sattva and purity. You need not go in for Satsanga. Mahapurushas come to you of their own accord. They are always in search of real and sincere Sadhakas. Therefore, they also remain in holy places like Badri, Kedar, Kailas, Hardwar, Brindavan, Mathura, etc.

Blessed indeed are those who take part in Parikrama, because they will soon attain peace, bliss and immortality! Glory to Lord Rama, the Lord of Ayodhya! Glory to Krishna the Indweller of all hearts, whose special seat is Brindavan! Glory to Bhaktas! May their blessings be upon you all!

## **Real Flower and Arati**

The tower of a temple represents Brahmastrandhra. Balipitha represents the navel or Manipura Chakra. Nandi represents Ajna Chakra. Dhvajastambha represents Sushumna Nadi which runs from Muladhara to Brahmastrandhra.

Dig-devata dwells in the ears, Vayu in the skin, Sun in the eyes, Varuna in the tongue, Asvins in the nose, Vishnu in the feet, Indra in the hands, Agni in the speech, Prajapati in the generative organ, Yama in the anus, Sutratman in the Prana, Hiranyagarbha in Antahkarana, Chandra in mind, Brahma in the intellect, Rudra in egoism, Shiva in Chitta, Sarasvati in the end of the tongue, Parvati in Anahata Chakra, Lakshmi in Manipura Chakra, Ganesa in Muladhara and Satchidananda Brahman in Brahmastrandhra at the crown of the head.

Satya, Ahimsa, Tapas, mercy, love, self-restraint, contentment, forgiveness, Jnana, equal vision, peace are the real flowers of Puja. All the Nadas are the waters for Abhisheka. The virtuous actions are the offering of incense. Vedanta is Pitambar. Jnana and Yoga are the Kundalas. Tapas and meditation are the lights. Japa is Chamara. Anahata is the music. Kirtan is umbrella. Pranayama is the fan.

Tattvas are the attendants of the Lord. nana-Sakti is the Devi. Agama is the commander. The eight Siddhis are the door-keepers of the Lord. Turiya is the Bhasma. Veda is the bull or Nandi. Kalyana Gunas represent the Trident in the hand. Panchakshara is the holy thread. Suddha Jiva is the ornament. The Vrittis are the Pujopakaranas. The Panchabhutas and the five Tanmatras are the Rudrakshamalas of Lord Shiva. Tiger skin represents Ahankara.

Kriya-Sakti and virtuous actions are Dhupa or incense for the Lord. Chit-Sakti which produces knowledge is also Dhupa. Offering of the ego and the mind at the lotus-feet of the Lord is real Naivedya. Just as camphor melts and becomes one with the fire, so also the mind of a sage melts and the individual soul gets merged in the Supreme Soul. This is real Karpura Arati.



## Lord Shiva and Martial Arts

Feel yourself inspired into Higher Realms of Consciousness with this section! The tales, poetry and inspirational tit-bits will provide the proverbial "Divine wind in our sails" on our journey through life's choppy seas! On Mount Kailash was Lord Shiva's Atmalinga, which was all powerful, as Lord Shiva himself had invested it, through *Prana Pratusti*, with Divine Powers.

King Ravana, a devout devotee of Lord Shiva, was also an Asura. Lord Ravana used to behead himself every day, and offer his decapitated head to his Shiving, as a form of worship.

However, there arose the thought in Ravana's mind that he should ask Lord Shiva for the boon of the Atmalinga, so that he could usurp Lord Shiva's powers, and become as powerful as his Master. To do so, he went to Mount Kailash, Lord Shiva's abode in the Himalayas, and through austerity, penance and worship pleased Lord Shiva with his devotion.

Lord Shiva, pleased with his devotee's love for him, appeared to him and asked him what boon he wished for. Immediately Ravana asked for the Atmalinga, for that was his purpose in performing the devotional rituals. Knowing Ravana's purpose, and reading his thoughts, Lord Shiva, told him that he could take the Atmalinga, but was not permitted to place it on the ground on his homeward journey to Lanka.

When evening fell, and time for Lord Shiva's worship approached, Ravana desperately looked around for someone who would hold the Atma Linga, so that he could perform his devotional worship.

Lord Ganesha appeared to him, in the form of a small boy, to whom Ravana, in desperation, entrusted the Linga, warning him not to place it on the ground. While Ravana was on the seashore meditating on Lord Shiva, the boy kept calling to him, telling him that the idol was too heavy to hold anymore. When Ravana was through with his *puja*, he turned around and found that the boy had disappeared, and that the idol had been placed on the sandy shore. He tried his best to lift it, but his Herculean strength also failed him.

Finally he gave up hope of taking it, and returned to Lanka emptyhanded.

A huge temple, where this idol is called "Mahabaleshwara" was eventually built there, and has become a place of worship for millions of Shaivites.

Lord Shiva had sent his powers to South India, to promote Shaivism there, and rejected the selfish demands of Ravana!

What does Shiva, aliens and an old martial arts from the state of Tamil Nadu have in common? According to legend the art of Varma Kalai was a martial art that was passed on to humans when lord Shiva walked amongst humans. The sage Agastya received the ancient martial art from Lord Shiva himself and passed it on to the masses. The warriors of an ancient tribe in Tamil Nadu used this martial art to fight off armed opponents and wild animals.



## **The Art of Varna Kalai**

What does Shiva, aliens and an old martial arts from the state of Tamil Nadu have in common? According to legend the art of Varna Kalai was a martial art that was passed on to humans when lord Shiva walked amongst humans. The sage Agastya received the ancient martial art from Lord Shiva himself and passed it on to the masses. The warriors of an ancient tribe in Tamil Nadu used this martial art to fight off armed opponents and wild animals.

Varna Kalai literally means hitting the vital points. The art is a study of the human anatomy and its pressure points so as to make use of its weakness and to take advantage of it when the need arises. The teachers of this deadly martial art have pin-pointed 108 points of the body which are susceptible to attack. These points can be used to render an assailant incapable of any type of movement. All this without the use of any weapons other than your hands.

A part of learning this martial art is to make use of the entire body as a single instrument rather than different instruments. When working in unity and harmony the human body can be trained to attack with a ferocity that is unbridled. This same harmony can be used to help the body heal and rebuild itself after any form of disease or attack.

These pressure points on the human body are known as "marma". Attacks can be performed on the nerves, bones, muscles, arteries, joints and the veins. Some of the attacks are debilitating while others are just downright lethal and can be used to kill a person with a single blow. Students are chosen only when they have proven to be strong willed characters that will use the art as a form of self-

defence. The teachers of the art are few and far between and do not take on many students.

Varma Kalai (the art of varmam) is considered to be very sacred. It is believed that Lord Siva taught this art form. It is one of the oldest form of South Indian martial art and healing system. The aim of Varma Kalai is to produce healthy individuals. The main purpose of this rare ancient art of varmam is to save the precious human lives. Varma Kalai is very popular in southern part of the county, more particularly in Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu.

The term varmam appears in the Rigveda where Indra hits Vritra in a varmam with his vajra. This system of varmam is part of *Sidha Vaidhyam*, whose origin is attributed to mythical sage Agastya and his disciples.

According to a versus, Lord Shiva taught varmam to his wife Parvathi; later Parvathi taught varmam to their son Lord Murugan. Lord Murugan then taught Siddha Agasthiyar. Agasthiyar later gave a written form that reached the masses. But the original texts, directly written by siddhas, are not available now. Saints who have grasped the meaning of the siddhas sayings have given a poetic form, which is used in modern day learning. So far, around 50,000 songs are available.

Varmam has grown under three independent schools of thoughts, mainly governed by three ancient siddha's namely Akasthiyar, Bohar and Rama Devar, The narrated history has been mentioned in the 41st prose of " Kai Mathirai Thiravukol ."

It says that a varmam teacher should teach varmam only to a 'sivayogi'. Sivayogi means devotee of Shiva. Knowledge of Varma Kalai is passed through generation after generation. People who have mastered the art are called asaans (masters). Varma asaans are also known as varmaanis. In order to learn this Art, it is necessary to work with an Asaan for a minimum period of twelve years.

## **Classifications of Varmam**

Human body is divided into five areas in which varma points are discussed. They are:

### **Unit Area Number of Points**

I	From Top of the Head till Neck	25
II	From Neck till Naval Point	45
III	From Naval Point till Anus	9
IV	Both Hands	14

V Both Legs	15
Total	108

## **Varma Therapy**

Studies about each varmam's (pressure points) characteristics like location of the varmam, depth and width of varmam, the pressure with which the varmam has to be tuned to cure diseases constitutes the mainstream study in varma therapy.

The various techniques that can be applied to cure varmam related injuries are:

1. Marukaalam
2. Thirumal Murai
3. Adangal Murai
4. Thiravukol Murai
5. Thadaval Murai [Applying massage techniques]
6. Marunthu Murai [Applying medicines]
7. Vayu Nilai Amarthal
8. Kattu Murai

Techniques like Marukaalam and Thiravukol Murai are used for instant relief. Techniques like Thadaval Murai and Thirumal Murai should be done at least for three consecutive days to give relief from varmam related injuries

## **Disorders that can be cured by Varma Therapy**

Various other disorders that can be cured with the help of Varma therapy are:

- Nerves weakness
- Body shivering
- Disk prolapse
- Dehydration
- Cervical spondylosis
- Head ache
- Sciatic Problems
- Eye problems
- ENT (Ear, Nose, and Throat) problems

- Bone joints and arthritics
- Gland disorders (like Diabetes, etc.)

Although most of the vital Varma Sastra texts in palm leaf have been lost, presently more than one-hundred are traced out. Each book consists of 100 to 1000 verses. These Sastras were not available to common men until the recently. Some of the books which are available are given below.

1. Brahma Nila Sutram
2. Vahada Nidanam
3. 'Marma Nidanam
4. Kadikaram' (Kannadi)
5. Marma Sutram
6. Marma Sutra Thiravukol
7. Agastiya Thiravukol
8. Marma Thiravukol
9. Marma Aani Thiravukol
10. Marma Kandi
11. Marma Bheerangi
12. Marma Bheerangi Thiravukol
13. Marma Narambarai
14. Ulpathi Narambarai
15. Odi Muri Chari
16. Kettu Mura Chari
17. Odivu Murivu Kettu Suttiram
18. Murivu Kettu Thiravukol



19. Narambarai Suttiram
20. Kaivallyam
21. Marma Alavu Nool
22. Naalu Mani Mathirai
23. Marma Kuru Naadi Sasthram
24. Kuru Naadi Sasthram



## **Modern Niyuddha Kride**

Modern NIYUDDHA KRIDE is instituted by Narendra Shrivastava, Grand Master as Nihyuddhacharya with its original Sanskrit Name "NIHYUDDHA" Nihyuddhacharya is the final authority of Nihyuddha sports pattern with the regard of World Nihyuddha foundation. Do remember that Niyuddha is not a Martial Art, but a life style.

The organization has establish the ancient Indian martial art “Niyuddha Kride” as the best martial art sport since “Mahashivratry- 1995”. Nihyuddha is an

ancient and true Indian Martial art. It was born in Satyug by the Gods. It has been developed through the most effective method of Weaponless self-defence but an intricate ART, an exciting sport and a trenchant method of maintaining physical and mental fitness.

The **Satya Yuga** (Devanagari: सत्य युग), also called **Sat Yuga**, **Krta Yuga** and **Krita Yuga** in Hinduism, is the first of the four Yugas, the "*Yuga* (Age or Era) of Truth", when humanity is governed by gods, and every manifestation or work is close to the purest ideal and humanity will allow intrinsic goodness to rule supreme. It is sometimes referred to as the "Golden Age". The Satya Yuga lasts 1,728,000 years. The goddess Dharma (depicted in the form of cow), which symbolises morality, stood on all four legs during this period. Later on in the Treta Yuga, it would become three, followed by two in the Dvapara Yuga. Currently, in the immoral age of Kali, it stands on one leg.

Many think that in all the regular martial arts as Judo, Karate, Taekwan-do, Kung-fu etc. are the real and true martial arts, but this is an entirely mistaken concept. Nihyuddha is the Mother art of all those martial art. Many other also think that Nihyuddha is an unknown Indian martial art and it is totally new. It is not true, in fact Nihyuddha is brought when the earth is born. Everyone knows very well that India is the first country who develops their civilization. So, definitely jauntily fight pattern is developing in India first. Kalary Payattam is good example of what we are saying here. Tremendous skill and control are required in Nihyuddha while blocking, punching, kicking and throwing techniques, all contribute to make Nihyuddha one of the most exciting and competitive sport, its challenge lies in the adept use of the techniques without having any actual body contact.

Complete control over blocking, punching, kicking, and throwing movements in paramount in stopping centimetres short of the opponent. Through the coordination of control. balance and techniques in the performance of MRITYUE NRITYA, Nihyuddha is regarded as a beautiful and highly skilled. It is also one of the most all-around methods of physical fitness. Since it utilizes every single muscle of the body and is considered the ultimate in unarmed self-defence. In ancient India (BHARAT), presidential protective forces (Sena of Raja\Maharaja and States ) are all trained in Nihyuddha and its training is must for everyone. Its training programs are organized by Rishi/Mahrishi's Ashram. In that time Nihyuddha divided in various parts of techniques. Nihyuddha has following parts and it prescribed step by step.

## **Aims of Niyuddha**

Niyuddha is an origin martial art from ancient INDIA. Following aims are followed with World Niyuddha Foundation:

1. Niyuddha is known as the best sport of martial art in all over the world.
2. Build up the mantel and physical power in human body.
3. Introduce the Niyuddha Dharma for any human specially Yoddha (Player of Niyuddha).
4. Bringing the way of truth and internal power (Para Shakti).
5. Affiliate all nations and countries with Niyuddha Dharma and sport's pattern.
6. Reaching every person to introduce and establish Niyuddha Dharma and sport's pattern.
7. Arrange Niyuddha's training camps, Niyuddha's master's training camps all over world and Nations, Countries up to their states and Districts.
8. Camps for referees, jury and judges for International, National, State and District level tournaments of Niyuddha.
9. Arrange Niyuddha's colour belt exams. Black Belt exams include with exam of acharya of Niyuddha. Also arrange examination for all the part of Niyuddha sport pattern and Niyuddha Dharma.
10. Awarding Niyuddha's all types' title and their certificates.
11. Issue license for Niyuddha coaching and classes for any part of the world.

Its training programs are organized by Rishi/ Mahrishi's Ashrama. In that time Niyuddha divided in various part of techniques as follows:

1. Mantra
2. Tantra
3. Yantra

### **1. Mantra**

The mean of mantra in Niyuddha is prescribing meditation through the God. Indian culture have the largest quantity of God. Shiva is greatest than other. In a fight of yoddha have disturbed mind or mental power. He will face

defeat in any fight or contest. So, initially he should meditate his mind at origin. He moves in soul by mantra power.

## 2. Tantra

The tantra is original method of the development of a fight. It is also divided in many parts.

Thus the body have following tools for fight against any opponent :

(i) head, (ii) hand, (iii) legs and (iv) body.

The well-thought combination of the above material makes various techniques to conquer all opponent, like blocking for defence, punching, kicking and throwing for attack. Mostly useful tools are hands and legs, in combination with other body parts.

## 3. Yantra

All types of weapons as like sword (talwar), knife, arrow and bow, modern weapons as like gun, revolver, machine gun etc. and the dangerous atomic weapons i.e. are the examples of Nihyuddha's Yantra logic.

# The Practice of Shiva Yoga

(For beginners)

### You will require:

– **Ishtalinga** – one small pot of water – one small bowl – two pieces of cloth (one that is well absorbing and another one which is soft, like flannel) (note: all items should never be used for purposes other than Shiva-yoga!)

1. Choose a silent place and sit in a comfortable but firm posture (sukhasana). It is best to sit on the floor. Wear comfortable clothes of natural material.

Sit in padmasana or some easy, comfortable but firm posture.

2. Place **Ishtalinga** in the centre of your left palm. A little sign that you notice on Ishtalinga must always face the thumb. Direct your index finger towards the centre of the bowl. Immerse your right ring finger in water and draw a water line along your index finger.

Place Ishtalinga on the palm of your left hand.

3. Take a pot of water in your right hand and slowly pour water over Ishtalinga, repeating 2-3 times mentally the mahamantra OM NAMA H SHIVAYA. The water should flow evenly down your index finger into the bowl.

Pour water over Ishtalinga, repeating the shadakshara (six-lettered) Mahamantra

4. Dry Ishtalinga with a clean, well absorbing piece of cloth. Dry it thoroughly. Dry your palm also. The palm should not be wet.

5. Gently rub your left palm on a soft flannel cloth. Your palm should be warm. Then gently rub Ishtalinga, in one direction only, from knee towards the body. This will make the coating of Ishtalinga very shiny and, more importantly, electricity will be generated.

Gently rub the Ishta-linga towards you (only in one direction)

6. Place an oil-lamp or a candle behind and just a little above your left shoulder.

Place an oil-lamp or a candle behind and just a little above your left shoulder.

7. Shiva-yoga is to be practised in the dark, so make sure the lights in the room are turned off or the blinds are closed.

Make sure that lights are turned off.

8. Place Ishtalinga on your left palm. Again the sign on Ishtalinga should be facing the thumb.

9. Raise your left palm so as to come in line with the place between your eyebrows. Greet Ishtalinga with a circular, anti-clockwise movement of your open right hand.

10. Determine the correct distance between Ishtalinga and the eyes. Use your right hand. Fold all fingers except the thumb. Press your right wrist against the left wrist and touch the tip of your nose with the tip of the thumb which should be straight. Once you do this, support your left arm with the right hand, either by holding your left elbow, or by tucking your right hand under your left arm-pit.

Take appropriate distance between left palm and eyes

11. Sit straight and start gazing at the speck of the light on the coating of Ishtalinga. This steadfast gazing is called Tratak. During Tratak your eyes

should be half closed and you should not blink. All the time, repeat mentally the mantra OM NAMAH SHIVAYA.

## **Yoga students practising Shiva-yoga**

12. Begin your practice with not more than 5 minutes (time of practice will increase on its own!), then bow down to Ishtalinga. By doing so, you actually bow down to Shri Swamiji<sup>1</sup>.

13. After the practice is over, remain seated in silence and enjoy the overall peace that surrounds you. Meditate with eyes closed. Thus all the benefit from the practice of Shiva-yoga will be preserved.

### **Important:**

Always sit in the same place. Face either north or east and try to start your practice at the same time every day. The best time is early in the morning (between 4 and 6 hrs) or in the evening (between 19 and 21 hrs). During Shiva-yoga practice do not wear any metal ornaments on your body as it will prevent the even flow of energy (prana), throughout your body. You should also remove

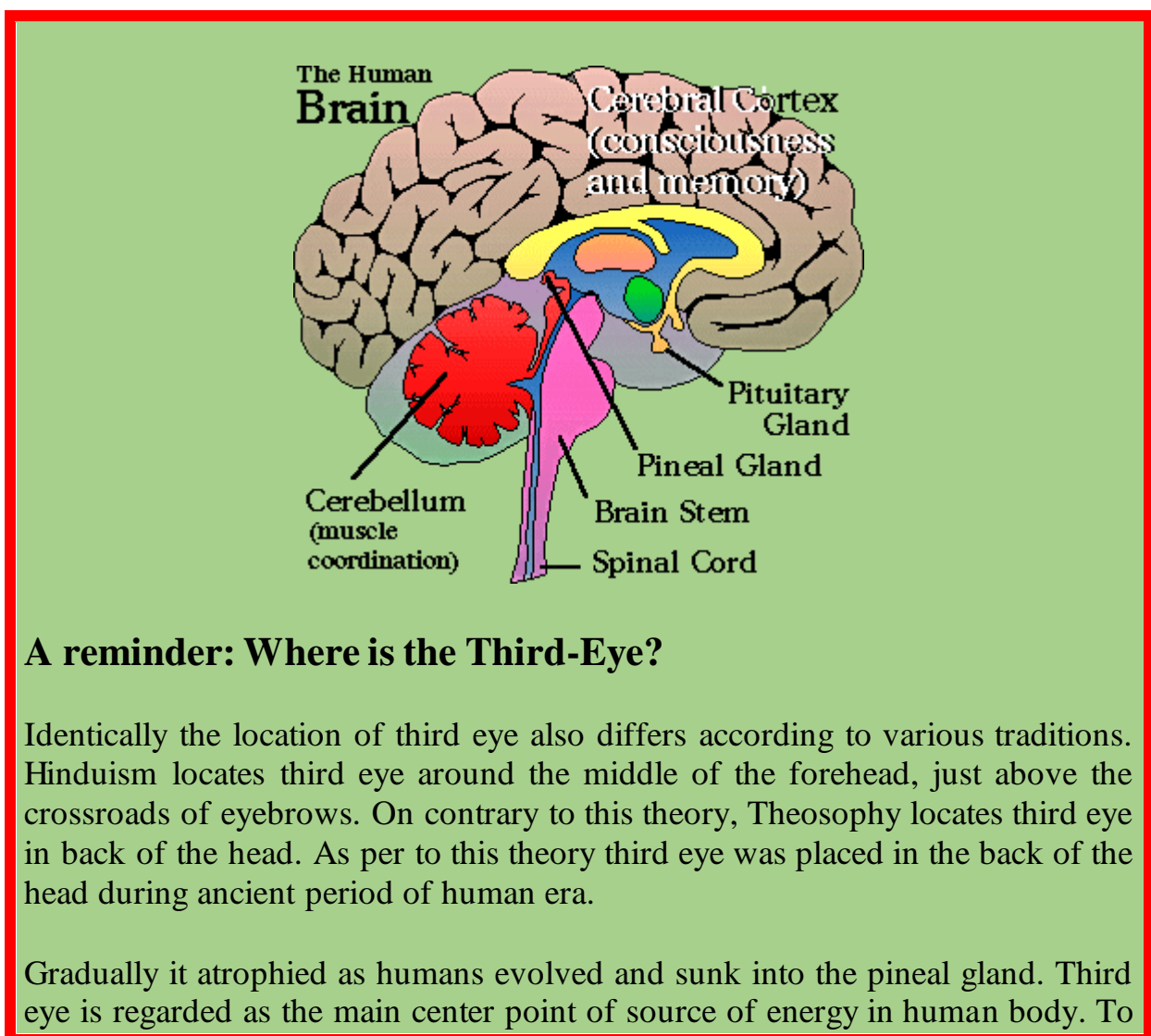
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<sup>1</sup> Sreepada Venkata Viswanatha was born on the banks of sacred river Godavari, on April 29, 1965, to the pious couple Rama Pattabhi and Satyavathi. Being from a devout Brahmin family, child Viswanatha, religiously and scrupulously followed all the religious customs. At the age of 26, in the year 1990, while Young Viswanatha was taking his regular ritual dip in the Holy River Godavari, Mother Goddess descended upon him and declared Viswanatha as the fifth incarnation of "GURU DATTATREYA", who is embodiment of the Holy Trinity, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. Since then Viswanatha became a monk and took Sreepada Srivallabha Venkata Viswanatha Swamy as his Ashrama name. Being ordained by the Mother Goddess, he took divine path to establish peace and goodwill on earth. To achieve peace, happiness, to develop the energy levels in the human body and to restore the draining energies in the nature, H.H. Swamiji analyzed several ancient scriptures, researched and finally formulated one unique way of meditation called Viswa Chetana, which consists of Cosmic Swish the mediation, and Sakti Dhara, the yogic method of downloading of Cosmic Energy. The Hindu way of life promises eternal peace with oneself, both to believers and non-believers of the religious doctrines. In the days of yore, men used to penance and prayed to hear the voices of the universal force. Those who did hear, follow and execute the instructions of God were hailed as Sages or Prophets. Guru, the teacher, is the torch that shows the true path, the force which removes Agnana (Ignorance) and reveals Jnana (Enlightenment). So, remember that whatever be the religion you believe in, you should aspire to merge with the universal force and through it, establish peace and goodwill on earth. Let us together today, pray to the Supreme Lord and invoke his blessings to guide us on the right path to peace and happiness. Let us practice Universal Brotherhood, Universal Love to lead happy and prosperous universal family and universal religion under the auspicious umbrella of Universal Force. May peace and joy be yours today and ever.

wrist-watch and specs or lenses. But, in case you are long-sighted, leave your specs on!

Keep your Ishtalinga in a small cotton or silk bag (never use leather or synthetic material). Treat your Ishtalinga with utmost care, respect and above all-love. It is sacred. If you wish, you can wear it on your body, i.e., around your neck so that it stays in the area of anahata chakra (heart centre). Your Ishtalinga has been blessed by Shri Kumarswamiji and is full of his Guru-shakti (Master's power) and Grace. The wearing of Ishtalinga fills your body with wonderful energy and gives you protection against various negative influences from the outside world. It also helps you to always remember Shri Kumarswamiji and the practice of Shiva-yoga.

Be regular in your practice and feel the blessings of Guruji.



### **A reminder: Where is the Third-Eye?**

Identically the location of third eye also differs according to various traditions. Hinduism locates third eye around the middle of the forehead, just above the crossroads of eyebrows. On contrary to this theory, Theosophy locates third eye in back of the head. As per to this theory third eye was placed in the back of the head during ancient period of human era.

Gradually it atrophied as humans evolved and sunk into the pineal gland. Third eye is regarded as the main center point of source of energy in human body. To



retrieve this power of your body you need to be focused on advanced mediation level of third eye. To activate the third eye, you need to concentrate on meditations and need to take care of following given points:

### **1. Sitting posture**

Correct sitting posture for third eye meditation is very essential. You have to relax your mind as well as your body to energize third eye. While sitting for meditation, remember to sit in crossed leg posture.

### **2. Belief**

Belief is another pillar of your success to meditate on your third eye. You have to believe in yourself that you are capable enough to stimulate third eye power. Faith on your meditation procedure is necessary to attain success.

### **3. Focus / Concentration**

Focus or concentration can be regarded as another mainstay to activate your third eye through meditation. You need to be forgetting about the materialistic world and have to focus or concentrate with closed eyes at the third or the chakra place in between your eyebrows. Focusing will fetch you to the era where everything will be dark except third eye or the chakra.

### **4. Environment**

To concentrate or focus on third eye applying the method of meditation you must accumulate proper environment for it. Any noisy place or a place filled with your materialistic era can distract your mind which can divert your concentration. Henceforth a calm place is needed to stimulate the chakra. It can be any room in your own place or in the lap of nature where you will be to unwrap your pineal gland.

### **5. Occurrence of Visual Effects**

Mediation of third eye will push your mind to flash visual effects of earlier scenes in front of you be it trains, various people your met, natural beauty like waterfalls, mountains, rivers etc. at this level of meditation you must try to visualize clear picture which your mind is trying to produce.

### **6. Feeling Pain**



At the final stage of meditation you will feel a slight pain as well as your third eye will glow. To reveal the answers of mysterious depths you must practice third eye meditation on a habitual way.



## Science – Psychology - Psychosynthesis

### Opening the Third-Eye Chakra

#### Scientific Basis in Opening the Third-Eye (Ajna Centre)

Eastern spiritual paths and certain occult traditions have emphasised the concept of the “Third Eye”. This psycho-physical feature was correlated in diagrams, artwork and explanations as being situated approximately above the physical eyes, in the middle of the forehead, and just above the central line of the nose.

Shiva Yoga of Meditation is an approach as well as an attempt to dive deep into the higher dimensions of human experience. Since truth is multidimensional, Yoga sees ranges of life beyond matter, ranges of mind beyond life, ranges of super-mind beyond mind and the range of Absolute or Sacchidanand beyond the super-mind. Shiva-yoga visualizes all existence as a federation of spirits united and integrated in the Absolute

The great principle of Shiva Yoga of Meditation aims at transcending the symbol through the symbol. Symbol is used of the human body as well as of Linga which is placed on the palm of the left hand corresponding to the inward and outward discipline of the aspirant. Linga assumes two forms as Ishta and Prana, like within and without, they are also inseparably related to each other. When through the exercise of unblinking gaze the aspirant is lost in meditation on Linga, he gradually loses the consciousness of within and without and finds himself in identity with the truth. Thus is the symbol transcended through the symbol.

This process of transcendence involves the profound and vital methods of psychological self-discipline and self-development so that the psychic life of man may express the spiritual life through the utmost possible expansion of its own richness, power and complexity. It is only on the wide and rich efflorescence of psychological life that absolute attainment of the spiritual can be securely based. This psychological self-discipline is embodied in Satsthala ” the sixfold path of the pilgrim’s progress.

The “Third Eye” was described as the seat of intuitive wisdom, of clairvoyance, of subtle information and spiritual or occult power. The famous French philosopher Rene Descarte believed that the Third Eye was the point where the mind and body met and so he coined it the “seat of the soul”.

The Third eye is a significant point in both Body-mind science as well as neuroscience, and these two disciplines may shed light on why this point in the body has such significant reality for the processes of consciousness as well as for our wellness and overall reality.

If one looks anatomically at this point on the skull then one finds that just behind the skull in this central point lies the Pineal Gland. The Pineal Gland is a small but critical hormonal gland in our body. The Pineal Gland is considered a regulating or master gland inasmuch as it regulates the cycles within our bodies, and stimulates the production of many of the other hormones and glands in the body.

The critical cycle in all this is the light and dark cycle which is how the Pineal Gland responds to the cycle of sunlight and darkness in our environment. This is known as the Circadian Rhythm or cycle. This is critically important for human mental and physical health and is primarily dictated by stable cycles or patterns of rest and waking which are assisted by the timely production of hormones that facilitate these night and day states.

Many people are familiar with Melatonin as it is the pill you are often prescribed when travelling in different time zones, or for sleep disorders, or when suffering Jet Lag. Melatonin is the key hormone that is produced by the Pineal Gland. Melatonin is activated and produced based on whether this light sensitive Pineal gland detects natural light external to the body.

Melatonin production is critically important for humans as it has been linked to our survival, sexuality and psychological senses due to its subsequent triggering of other critical hormonal and organ processes in each of us. Melatonin is produced by the Pineal Gland modifying the feel-good hormone Serotonin found in the brain.

Serotonin is also a critical hormone found in the body, and is found in only very small amounts in the brain. Overall low Serotonin levels are a classic symptom

and outcome of Depression. One of the problems with Depression is the resulting depletion of Serotonin also can rob the brain of its already low amounts of this critical chemical.

If the Pineal Gland then cannot source enough Serotonin and so produce enough Melatonin in that depressed person, sleep disorders can arise(which is a common symptom of Depression Sufferers). What is worse is that the Pineal Gland can then in turn also have a disruptive effect on other cycles or the Circadian Rhythm of the body, and so other problems and negative effects can arise for that person.

Likewise the absence of the triggering or stimulating effect of natural sunlight and its Ultra-violet component will also create a similar disruptive effect. In climates of the earth where sunlight is weak, clouded or periodically restricted, we find a related condition called Seasonal Adjustment Disorder(SAD). SAD looks and feels just like depression because of the similar effects that arise from the interrupted action of the Pineal Gland and how that influences the bodymind outcome of that person.

A contrast to this is the effect of exposing oneself in a relaxed way in the sun(sunburn excluded). The positive effect of being out in the natural sunshine and getting a good dose of sunlight is increased Pineal Gland production of Melatonin and also of Serotonin due to related but separate processes of the body, brain and Autonomic Nervous System(ANS). It is always recommended to depression sufferers to get out of their cold dark bedrooms and into the sun and into their bodies so they can let their natural healing responses of the Pineal gland and other Body-mind processes do their positive work.

Interestingly Schizophrenics and Bi-Polar disorder sufferers have been found to either have low Serotonin or fluctuating levels of the same hormone in their body over time. Our psychological health is very much influenced by these critical hormones and glands in our body.

Serotonin and Melatonin have spiritual links to human consciousness as each is needed and involved in how the brain executes higher orders of consciousness. This is probably why in Hindu and Buddhist literature we see the Third Eye as being the Body-mind point of higher consciousness or the spiritual centre in man.

Neuroscience also informs us of this reality. Brain scans done with PET imaging equipment show that when a person meditates there is a lot of activity triggered in the medial prefrontal cortex. The medial prefrontal cortex lies in the same general area of the "third eye" of occult and eastern spiritual literature. Brain research informs us that people who regularly meditate actually physically

evolve their brain structures with neural changes that promote higher consciousness.

Firstly, the medial pre-frontal cortex is thought by Neuroscientists to be part of the cognitive(mental) processing system of humans and appears to play a inhibitory calming or influencing role over the emotional or limbic part of the brain. This part of the brain also has been found to mediate and down-regulate the production of the stress hormone known as cortisol that is produced via the Hypothalamic-Pituitary gland-Adrenal gland axis (HPA axis) when a person is stressed.

The signalling by the medial prefrontal cortex appears to regulate the generalization of fear and can dampen an overall increase in escalation of fear mediated by the Amygdala, which is the part of the brain that evokes a “fight or flight” response in us all. This is believed to be partly why meditation and mindfulness practices can assist anxiety and trauma sufferers to “dampen” down arousal symptoms in their nervous system and brain function.

Neuroimaging or brain scans have confirmed that meditators actually shrink their Amygdala over time. This is important as it reduces a person reactive “fight or flight” triggers and increases the tolerance of arousal that a person can take on until they activate that emotional “fight or flight” state of being. Such a person becomes able to be emotionally stable and in present time as a result of such changes. This equates to an aspect of the Buddhist concept mindfulness.

Secondly and more specifically, a part of the brain known as the Orbitofrontal Cortex lies just above the orbit of the eyes and forms part of the frontal lobe in the area that correlates to the “third eye”. This piece of brain facilitates direct inputs from many other cortical and sub-cortical areas of the brain. It also sends or signals outwards other forms of information and signals to the same and different cortical and subcortical regions of the brain.

The wealth of incoming information provides a snapshot of what is happening in the external environment as well as what reactions and plans are being organised by other parts of the brain. Critically its output communication affect a variety of behaviours and physiological responses, including emotional and ANS responses organised by the Amygdala part of the brain.

It is this mediating function that apparently helps us integrate external experience with internal states, and also allows us to influence states of being in the body and to raise our window of tolerance of arousal from internal and external sources of discomfort. This is speculated as being the vehicle by which Siddhis and spiritual people can alter their own bodily functions such as heart rate, blood flow, pain thresholds etc when you see them demonstrating unusual

“tricks” that appear painful or which would signal injury or death in the rest of us.

The Orbitofrontal Cortex is also an area of brain that “lights up” in brain scans when meditation and visualisation occurs. If one notices that the “outputs” go to mental centres, emotional centres, physiological processes, and memory areas of the brain then an interesting correlation should be noted. In meditation it is stressed that one should develop the correct logical thoughts or reasoning(mental), develop a strong feeling(emotional), create a stable visualisation(memory), and have correct meditative posture(physiological posture) when doing so.

In effect it is speculation but perhaps this is the critical reason why advancing one’s spiritual realisations require the alignment of each of these key areas. The implication is that the Orbitofrontal Cortex may “update” our Bodymind reality across these different cortical and subcortical areas of brain function. A comprehensive set of new information may in turn shape our operative reality, which is the basis for the creation of “realisation” in humans as a deep personal experience, as against just a mental conceptual knowledge of the same object.

Neuroimaging not only shows that meditators shrunk their Amygdala over time, but also that their Hippocampus increases over time. The Hippocampus is commonly associated with memory function, and is part of the temporal lobe of the brain. It appears that the Hippocampus plays a key part in consciousness by shaping conscious or declarative thinking and also mediating learnt responses from past associations with incoming sensory data.

It is known that trauma and continued stress can damage Hippocampus cells via the action of the stress hormone Cortisol which creates cell damage and shrinkage of the Hippocampus. Apparently meditation can reverse or repair some of this damage and facilitates growth of the Hippocampus area of the brain. Meditation has been shown to have a calming effect on the Body-mind system and promotes a relaxed feel-good, parasympathetic state of the ANS outcome. Immune system repair of the body needs such a state to exist for healing to occur and be sustained.

In conclusion it can be seen that there is now more evidence emerging that the point in the body known as the “third eye” correlates to the same physical location of brain and gland functions which have direct impacts on our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual states of being, as well as states of consciousness.

## **Activating the Third Eye Chakra**

Activating the third eye chakra is key to developing your innate gifts. Also known as Ajna or the brow chakra because of its position in the centre of the brain, it is the sixth of the seven chakras.

Your third eye therefore is also considered the “sixth sense” which improves your powers of intuition, clairvoyance, perception and psychic ability. But its real power is the ability to visualise.

The third eye has been linked with the pineal gland which secretes melatonin as we sleep. Although scientists are still conducting research to provide conclusive proof, Dr Rick Strassman believes the pineal gland is what enables us to have visions when we dream.

It could be possible then that the third eye is our mind’s eye. For those of you who have the ability to create visions in your head, you have the ability to create. For those of you who cannot see visions, it is time to wake up your mind’s eye.

Once you learn how to develop visualisation through the process of meditation, you can better tap into your inner-wisdom and communicate with your sub-conscious mind.

According to Dr Joseph Murphy and other psycho-analytical researchers, it is the sub-conscious mind that ultimately manifests things in our lives. Therefore, having the ability to visualise and see yourself in situations you want to be in can become a reality.

Of course, your desires have to be within reason. If you visualise yourself with a film star, it does not mean it is going to happen. When other people are involved in your dreams, they have to be open to receive your desire.

### **Third Eye meditation techniques**

There are several powerful techniques you can use to open the third eye and you may need to experiment with several before you find one that works for you. Some people find that a guided meditation helps to produce stronger visualisation.

Third eye activation is not a quick process. It requires patience. If you access your third eye regularly, you will eventually experience some “quantum leaps” or “openings”. It is not either open or closed. There is an ongoing awakening process.

There is some danger to third eye meditations. It may be wise to gather as much info as you can about this before you practice such exercises regularly. Also research the pitfalls of spiritual materialism.

You may experience some symptoms when opening your third eye chakra. Symptoms include a feeling of pressure at the point between the eyebrows, headaches, strange imagery, information overload and oversensitivity (especially around people).

Some of this may be OK. You're getting used to activating parts of your brain that you weren't working with before. However, you may need to keep an eye on yourself and "check in" regularly. If it's too overwhelming, scale back your third eye chakra meditations a little bit with shorter sessions, or even take a break for a while if you have to.

For a while, you may not experience anything remarkable. That's OK as well. Real processes are happening behind the scenes even in that case. They will build up into more visible processes.

To help prevent uncomfortable symptoms, be sure to combine this practice with grounding exercises. These include physical exercise, anything that generates feeling in the body and grounding meditations of various kinds. This will help you to keep your delicate upper chakras and your lower chakras in balance. Don't just fly off into la la land.

You want to practice the following third eye opening meditation at least a few minutes per day for best results. Try not to skip a day because momentum is important here.

## **How to Open Your Third Eye**

The third eye symbolizes an enlightened state of consciousness through which one can perceive the world. This will teach you how to open your third eye so that you can have a deeper sense of intuition about the world around you.

### **Brief Summary**

1. Find someplace peaceful.
2. Sit down comfortably.
3. Pick an object to focus on.
4. Pick a mantra and use it.
5. Meditate and focus on your third eye chakra. It is on your forehead, between your eyes.

6. Become more mindful. Go outside, get creative, and notice the little things.

## **Part One – Learning Meditation**

### **Learning the Third Eye Meditation**

1. Locate your third eye chakra. Chakras are the energy centers in your body. Essentially, that are wheels of energy that align along your spine. There are seven chakras, and each corresponds to a different part of your physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Your third eye chakra is the sixth chakra.
  - The third eye chakra is located at the forefront of your brain, between your two eyes. It is right above the bridge of your nose.
  - When you meditate, try to focus your mind on this chakra. It is responsible for helping you to see the world more clearly.
2. Choose the right surroundings. Meditation is one of the most effective tools for helping you to open your third eye. By bringing more awareness to your thoughts, you will be able to better access the mental clarity that is associated with the third eye. The core goal of meditation is to bring the mind to rest on one thought or object. It is important to choose surroundings where you feel comfortable when you are beginning to meditate.
  - Some people feel more peaceful and open-minded when they are out in nature. If this sounds like you, you might consider meditating outdoors. Find a space that is the right temperature and where you can sit without being disturbed by others.
  - Indoor meditation is also perfectly fine. Many people have a designated meditation space in their home. This generally includes a cushion that makes it more comfortable to sit on the floor, and perhaps some candles and soothing music.
  - Remember that meditation is a very personal process. You should choose the surroundings that are right for you.
3. Prepare your posture. The mind-body connection is very important in meditation. The more comfortable you are physically, the easier it will be to focus on you meditation object or thought. The most effective meditation posture is generally thought to be some variation of sitting cross-legged on the ground.



- If you are used to sitting in a chair, take some time each day to get used to sitting on the floor. In time, it will feel more natural it will be easier to focus on your meditation.
  - Most people choose to use at least one cushion to make sitting on the ground more comfortable. Feel free to use two or three sturdy cushions if you find this works better for you.
  - If you simply cannot be comfortable sitting, don't worry. You can try what is known as walking meditation. For some people, the rhythmic sounds of their footfalls can be very soothing. Walk slowly, and have a clear path so that you don't have to think too much about where you are going.
4. Choose a meditation object. A meditation object can be a thought or a physical object. The point of choosing one is to make it easier for your brain to focus. This will keep your thoughts from wandering and will make your meditation more effective.
    - Candles are a popular meditation object. The flickering flame is easy to look at and are comforting to many people.
    - Your meditation object does not have to be nearby physically. Feel free to picture the ocean or a beautiful tree that you once saw. Just make sure you can clearly see the object in your mind's eye.
  5. Pick a mantra. A mantra is a word or phrase that you will repeat during your meditation practice. You might say the mantra internally or out loud-that is a personal preference. Your mantra should be something that is personal and meaningful to you.
    - Your mantra should be something that you want to integrate into your mind, or your awareness. For example, you might choose to repeat, "I choose happiness". This will help reinforce the idea that you are going to focus on feeling joy throughout the day.
    - Another mantra idea is to choose just one word. For example, you could repeat the word "peace".
  6. Make it a routine. Meditation is a practice. That means that the first time to sit down to meditate, it might not be a big success. Your mind might wander, or you might even fall asleep. Learning to successfully meditate is a process and it takes time.
    - Make meditation a part of your everyday life. Begin with very small increments, maybe five minutes or even just two. Soon you will feel more

comfortable with the process and be able to devote more time to meditation each day.

## **Part Two – More Mindfulness**

1. Learn what it means to be mindful. Being mindful means that you are more actively aware of what is going on around you. You are consciously paying attention to your emotions and physical sensations. Being more mindful will help you to get in tune with yourself and the world around you.
  - As you are becoming more observant, avoid being judgmental. Just observe and acknowledge without forming an opinion about whether something is "right" or "wrong".
  - For example, if you are feeling stressed out, do not judge yourself for feeling that way. Simply observe and acknowledge your emotions.
2. Go outside. Spending some time outside can be very helpful in becoming more mindful. Being more mindful can help you to open your third eye because you will be more aware of it. Therefore, it's a good idea to try to take a short walk each day, in an effort to spend more time in nature.
  - In today's culture, we are "plugged in" for much of our day. This means that we are almost always looking at some sort of electronic or communication device. Going outside reminds us to actively take a break from all of the stimuli.
3. Be creative. Being mindful can allow you to get more in touch with your creative side. Research suggests that mindful meditation is a great cure for writer's blocks and for blocks that artists and other creative types experience. Being more mindful can allow you to open up your creative pathways.
  - Try experimenting with your creative side. Take up painting, sketching, or learning a new musical instrument. Letting your creativity flow will help you to feel more in-tune with yourself, and help you to open your third eye.
4. Focus on the small things. Day to day life can feel very hectic and overwhelming. Being more mindful can help you to feel calmer and better able to utilize your third eye. Pay attention to each aspect of your surroundings and your routine.

•For example, when you are taking a shower, consciously observe the physical sensations. Take note of how the warm water feels on your shoulders. Appreciate the refreshing scent of your shampoo.

### **Part Three – Benefiting from Your Third Eye**

1. Feel more peaceful. Once you learn to open your third eye, you will be able to experience the benefits that go along with it. Many people report feeling more at peace after opening their third eye. Part of this is due to achieving a greater sense of self-compassion. Being more aware of yourself generally causes you to practice more self-kindness.

•Being kinder to yourself offers many benefits. You will feel more self-confident and less anxious.

2. Be more knowledgeable. One of the reasons many people want to open their third eye is because it is thought to make you more knowledgeable. Since it increases your perception of the world around you, it makes sense that you will be able to learn more about the world around you. People who have opened their third eye report that they feel like they have more wisdom.

•You will also become more knowledgeable about yourself. Meditation and mindfulness are great ways to get in touch with yourself. When you better understand your emotions, you will feel more capable of dealing with them.

3. Improve your physical health. Opening your third eye is very likely to reduce your stress levels. You will feel more peaceful and self-aware. There are many physical benefits from reduced levels of stress. People with less stress are less likely to have high blood pressure and symptoms of depression.

•Experiencing less stress can also mean a reduction in things such as headaches and upset stomachs. It can even help you have younger looking skin.

### **Another Meditation Method for Opening Your Third Eye Chakra**

1. Sit in a comfortable position. Lying on your back is also OK. Take a few deep breaths through the nose. Let your abdomen expand in all directions as you inhale. You'll feel it in your back as well as your belly. Allow yourself to relax a little bit more with every breath.

2. Imagine yourself as a ball of white light in the center of your chest. Every inhale is going to this ball of light. It's getting bigger. Do this for a few breaths.
3. As this ball of light, travel up to your throat area, "gathering" your consciousness along the way. You are becoming bigger and brighter as you do this. Go up to your third eye chakra, the point between the eyebrows and just a little bit inward, and do the same.
4. Travel up to your crown. This should be that soft spot on the top of your head that was very soft when you were a baby. It's also known as the fontanel.
5. Point your eyes upward so that they're "looking" into the point between the eyebrows. Stretch your forehead upward so that it's kinked. Your eyes should discover a little "sweet spot" that lets you know they're pointing in the right direction. If not, no worries.
6. Exit the crown with a little pop. Go up about three feet and look around for a second or two. Go up 100 feet and do the same.
7. Travel upward. Go past the sun and moon. Go past millions of stars and galaxies until you're past the universe and you don't see any of these things.
8. In the distance, you see a ball of whitish light with a purplish blue tint. The tint has an indigo color. It's getting bigger and bigger until it's very close. Now it's huge. Enter it. Your brainwaves are now vibrating in a Theta frequency.
9. If you see anything other than this light, go deeper into it. You're in a whole new plane. Let the light "rinse" you. Bathe in the light.
10. Relax your forehead and eyes and breathe in this light. Let it enter your jaw on the inhale. Notice any tension in the upper and lower jaw. Allow the jaw to relax, especially on the exhale.
11. Do the same for the sides of the head, the back of the head, the forehead and the top of the head. Optionally, if you're feeling ambitious, do the same for all parts of the body.
12. Point your eyes upward to your third eye chakra, between the eyebrows, and stretch your forehead again. Keep breathing through the nose.
13. Chant a long "om" with every exhale. You can do it loud or quietly. The important thing is that you are aware of the vibration from this mantra

in your forehead. Keep the “ooooo” roughly equal in length to the “mmmmm”.

Experiment with different pitches so that you find the right pitch that vibrates just right in your third eye chakra point.

14. Let go into the vibration. Let yourself become increasingly absorbed in it. It is new and unique every time. Relax into it and enjoy it. Take it in.

You can also imagine the vibration of the om vibrating outward infinitely in all directions, connecting with the all. In this case, you are still absorbed in the vibration of the om in your third eye chakra point.

If thoughts or emotions come up, let them be what they are. There’s no need to push them away. They can coexist with the OM. They will arise and fall away on their own.

Now you know how to open your third eye chakra. Keep practicing this meditation technique. If you develop what they call “siddhis” or powers, be sure to develop wisdom at the same rate. Don’t be that little boy with the nuclear arsenal.

## **How to Reach a Theta State of Mind Without Machines**

It is easy to reach a Theta state of mind without binaural beats, metronomes or other nicknacks. Here you will learn how to enter a Theta state with a quick visualization exercise PLUS how to use it for intuitive work.

A Theta mind state gives a surprisingly powerful boost to intuitive work and your ability to access the subconscious mind.

First of all, you know what a Theta state is, right? Theta brainwaves correspond to a state of mind associated with dreams and waking dreams, as well as a deep meditative state.

Theta brainwaves are slower than the Beta and Alpha activity we normally have in daily life. They vibrate at between 4 and 8 cycles per second. Theta states are normally responsible for those “Eureka!” moments of well known inventors and scientists. They are highly creative states.

In a Theta state, you tap into the creative and intuitive resources of your mind. When you can consciously control this state of mind, then problem solving and tapping into your intuition becomes much easier. Goal achievement also becomes a much easier and more efficient process.

It really is super-duper simple to achieve a Theta state without any gadgets or machines. I mean it. Honest. Just do the following visualization.

We'll start with the optional grounding part. It is important to visualize going into the Earth, at least some of the time. Entering a Theta state of mind through this type of exercise can be very un-grounding. If you do this visualization often, you'll want to do yourself a favour and keep grounded.

### **Grounding Exercise to Prepare for the Theta State**

1. Close your eyes and relax. Imagine yourself as a ball of white light in the center of your chest.
2. Travel downward toward the belly, gathering your body consciousness into that ball. The ball becomes bigger and brighter as you gather that consciousness.
3. Travel down through the groin and through the thighs, knees, ankles and feet. You continue to become larger as you do this.
4. Go through the bottoms of the feet until you're a few feet into the Earth.
5. Go a few hundred feet deeper into the Earth's crust. Find a very large rock.
6. Attach a cord to yourself. Attach the other end of the cord to this very large rock.
7. Head back up to the bottoms of your feet. Go back up through your feet, ankles, knees, groin and belly. Gather your body consciousness even more.

Now you're back where you started. Now we will continue with the beginning of the Theta exercise. This part is not optional.

### **Visualization for Entering a Theta Mind State**

1. You are a ball of white light in the middle of your chest. Your eyes are closed.
2. Travel upward toward your neck, gathering your body consciousness into your ball. You, as the ball, are growing bigger and brighter as you do this.
4. Go through the jaw and the head while continuing to gather the body consciousness. Stop at the fontanel (crown) at the top of your head.
5. With a little bit of a pop, exit the fontanel and go three feet above your head. Look around. You are now in a Theta state, but we're not done yet. We need to reinforce this state of mind.

6. Go up a few hundred feet and look around.
7. Keep going past the sun and the moon and through millions of galaxies.
8. Go past the universe.
9. In the distance is a ball of bluish white light. As you approach it, this ball gets bigger and bigger until it's right there in front of you.
10. Enter this light. You are in a whole new plane. Keep going through this light until it is all that exists.
11. Let the light wash through you and cleanse all your tension and impurities. Bathe in the light.

As soon as you, as the little ball of light, exited through the crown, you reached a Theta brainwave state. You went up further, past the galaxies, past the universe, into the ball of light to the place where only the light exists. The extra steps in the visualization are to ensure that you are solidly in Theta.

You can use this Theta visualization as a meditation by sitting in the place of light that you entered in the visualization. You can also ask questions to tap into your intuition and solve problems, such as “What do I have to do today to get that job”.

If you practice visualization for manifestation work, you can do your visualizations in the place of light you entered in the exercise. This will enhance your ability to achieve your goal.

When you ask questions or visualize a goal after reaching a Theta state, do not be impatient. Intuitions will come through visual, kinesthetic, “direct knowing” and/or audio channels – but not necessarily right away.

Intuitions may come within a few seconds or minutes, or they may come the next day. They will manifest more quickly with practice. The key is to let go and allow these things to come up.

Do not try to interpret what comes up. Just take note of everything that goes through your mind. Write them down if you have to. Let your conscious mind process the information. Then, suddenly, you may have a “Eureka!” moment.

I find it easiest to use this method to answer other people's questions. Try partnering up and let your partner ask the questions. Don't interpret anything. Just tell them exactly what you see, feel, “know”, etc – no matter how ridiculous it seems. The feedback may surprise you.

For example, if you see a kangaroo playing double Dutch with two little girls, tell them that. They might just say, “Oh my God! I once saw a kangaroo playing

double Dutch with two little girls when I was five years old!” Or the connection may be more subtle but profoundly meaningful.

If you partner up, wrap up the session by going back up to the light and letting it rinse you.

If you want to solidly anchor yourself in a state of mind that is conducive to achieving your goals and really get the most out of the Theta brainwave state, I would recommend a solid meditation practice.

The exercise you learned is an adaptation of a Theta Healing visualization. The basis of Theta Healing is to reach a Theta mind state and use that for all kinds of applications from changing subconscious beliefs to spiritual healing and psychic work. Her visualization is a little more elaborate to allow for advanced Theta state applications.



## **Running High Mentally Meditation**

Mentally tough runners typically have intense focus, high stamina and both physical and mental resilience. How does meditation enhance these things?

It's widely known that meditation enhances focus, because you are usually focusing on something. It goes without saying that this laser focus that practitioners develop will manifest in the running experience as well.

The mindfulness element of meditation will increase your stamina during running because mindfulness gives you the ability to “hang” with and gracefully accept whatever's happening in the present moment. This includes thoughts, anxiety, physical pain and whatever else is happening in the now.



That ability to gracefully experience the here and now increases your stamina and your mental resilience. The ego grasps at comfort and pushes away discomfort. Mindfulness breaks down the knee-jerk attraction and repulsion and gives us more choices other than needlessly reacting to our own experiences.

Paying attention to the feelings in the body will also give us opportunities to relax into the run without wasting needless energy. We then have the opportunity to develop physical resilience.

## **Runner's High**

You may have heard of runner's high, and you may also have experienced it for yourself. Runner's high occurs when the act of running releases some of the happy chemicals in the brain known as endorphins.

This is just one component of runner's high. The other is a state of flow which occurs when everything falls away except you and the road, floor or treadmill.

This state of flow is a major part of meditation. If you've experienced runner's high, there's also a good chance that you have experienced meditation at the same time.

The simple act of long term running has been shown to reduce anxiety and depression. The same can be said about meditation. They have a lot in common. It can be a great combo.

## **How to Practice Running Meditation**

There are at least a couple of different ways to do running meditation. One involves synchronizing your running with your breath, and the other method you'll learn here does not.

Most meditation techniques have an object of focus. It may be a mantra, the breath, a candle flame, a visualized image and many other things.

Typically, you become deeply absorbed in that object. If you've experienced a good lover, you have probably found that some situations make it very easy to concentrate with full attention. In fact, love and concentration are the same thing in the advanced stages.

In running meditation, you are anchored in the consciousness of the sensation of running. The high physical stress certainly makes it easier to pay attention to what is happening in the body.

The way to combine meditation and running is to pay full attention to what's going on in the body. The pain, the breath, the feeling of your feet hitting the ground, the rhythm of the running, your own thoughts.

Let go of thoughts of dinner, the work you have to do tomorrow and the work you were supposed to do yesterday.

## **Add Mindfulness for Running Stamina**

Sometimes when I run or ride a bike up a steep hill, anxious thought occurs. Other thoughts about some time other than now also occur.

There may be times when you're physically comfortable during the run, and your mind has the privilege to wander aimlessly.

Whatever your mind is doing, be fully present with whatever is going on. It could be that you're not concentrating well on the experience of running, but that shouldn't take you out of the present moment.

All this thinking is happening **WITHIN** the present moment. They are processes occurring within you.

Be present with that. You are an impartial observer who is calmly witnessing these thinking events happening in the here now. Acknowledge this thinking as if it's a good friend.

When you pay attention to a thought instead of following it, it loses its grip on you. You may find that the thought starts to fade when you shine the light of loving attention on it.

After acknowledging the inner processes, go back to the rhythm of the run, the feet hitting the ground, the body sensations and the breath. If thoughts happen again, repeat the mindfulness process and then go back to the rhythm and sensations of the run.

This mindfulness process accumulates equanimity, and this leads to peace and what some refer to as mental toughness. Mindfulness builds up running stamina.

## **Synchronizing the Breath with Your Running Meditation**

Try adding some rhythm to the breath and see if that helps. It gives you something to concentrate on.

Running usually involves breathing through the mouth, so stick with that unless you want experiment with the nose as well. I can't vouch for the nose method.

### **However you do it, try the following.**

Your right foot and then left foot hit the ground. Count this as one cycle. Take a deep inhale for four cycles, and let out a deep exhale for four cycles. Both the inhale and the exhale are of equal intensity.

If you want to increase stamina and send more oxygen to your muscles, let your abdomen inflate like a balloon while your chest remains relatively still. This will tone up your lungs and diaphragm.

Most runners are chest breathers, but this method may help you with both meditation and stamina building. Strengthen your respiratory system and strengthen your running stamina. Conversely, the more respiratory stress, the more your leg muscles will suffer.

A study at the Centre for Sports Medicine and Human Performance at Brunel University in England confirms this.

Synchronizing the breath does help to strengthen the diaphragm. Even if you don't wish to synchronize your breath with the rhythm of your running, try this belly breathing method anyway.

Let yourself become increasingly absorbed in the breath. You are "becoming one" with the breath, just like you "become one" with a love partner.

The belly breathing method may also help you to let go of tension and conserve your energy for running. This brings us to the next section.

## **Relax the Body during the Run**

Here's another variation of running meditation. During the run, try "checking in" with one body part at a time and notice where you are especially tense. Let go of as much tension as you can with each body part. Some parts of your body, including your face, ankles, forehead and hands, may be more rigid than you need them to be. Let go of all that and relax into the run. You need only be as tense as necessary during running meditation, but I repeat myself.

It probably goes without saying that conserving energy is another great way to build stamina.

Remember to apply mindfulness when anything distracts you from this tension clearing process.

No matter how you choose to do running meditation, your mind is going to relax. Relax into the immediate physical reality. As you relax, you may find that it's easier to attune yourself with the surrounding environment. Relax into that as well.



## **Zen Meditation**

Zen has so many different lineages, so there are tons of variations of Zen techniques. However, Zazen does have a few central principles that seem to exist in every variant.

### **Zazen Posture**

Posture is very important in Zazen meditation. Zen places a big emphasis on building a physical foundation for meditation.

The traditional sitting postures are the half lotus and the full lotus. For most people, I would not recommend either. There are other, semi-traditional postures as well.

The most important thing to remember about Zazen posture like in all meditation disciplines is that you keep your back straight.

If you use a cushion, you can sit cross legged in normal sitting meditation style. Try to make sure your knees are lower than your butt.

I'm sitting in a plastic lawn chair. If you're doing this in a chair, put both feet flat on the floor and do not lean back on the chair.

In some lineages, they stand with feet about a shoulder width apart with the toes pointing slightly outward.

### **Some practitioners kneel while sitting on their heels/ankles.**

Regardless of your posture, you want your tailbone planted firmly. Starting with your tailbone, stack all vertebrae one on top of another. Work your way all the way up. Tuck in your chin just a little bit. Your crown should feel like it's holding up the sky.

## **Tongue Position**

Close your mouth and teeth. Don't clench tightly. Just relax your mouth.

Point your tongue upward toward the roof of the mouth. Push it back toward the throat. Give it a good swallow to signal your body not to produce saliva.

## **Hand Mudra**

Face your right palm upward with the four fingers together. Bring it to the point just below the navel. Point your fingers to the left.

Do the same with your left hand, but point your fingers to the right. Place your left hand fingers on top of your right hand fingers.

The point of the middle knuckle of the left index finger is resting in the groove of the middle knuckle of the right index finger.

The point of the middle knuckle of the left middle finger is resting in the groove of the middle knuckle of the right index finger.

## **And so on. This is approximate.**

Rest hands on your lap in this position. The pinkies are resting on your lap, and your thumbs still don't know what the hell they're doing.

In this position, your thumbs kind of want to meet each other. Gently press the thumbs together, forming the best circle you can. The "hole" should have some roundness and integrity to it. It's a firm circle.

Just relax the hands in this mudra with your lap supporting the pinkies. Nothing is forced. Relax your shoulder muscles and just let gravity hold the hands in place.

## **Zazen Gaze**

In Zazen meditation, your eyes are open.

Focus on a point about three feet in front of you. Your eyes may want to close slightly. Now look down at a 45 degree angle toward the ground. Don't move your head to do this. Remember you're keeping your spine straight.

Your eyes are not open too much and not closed too much. You're focusing on nothing in particular.

## **How to Do Zazen**

First, check your posture. Move your upper body from side to side. Find the sweet spot so that your back feels straight. Let your shoulders and arms relax instead of fighting gravity.

Breathe through the nose. Allow your chest to relax so that your abdomen is what is moving. It is like your abdomen is filling like a balloon. There is pressure in all directions on the inhale, including toward the back.

Your focus point is the hara, the point that is a couple finger widths below the navel and just a little bit toward the inside of the body.

The breath should be nice and easy. Imagine that the hara is pulling or drawing the breath into itself. It's doing all the work in your breathing.

Focus on the breath with particular attention on the hara. This is what you are "falling in love" with. As you become more absorbed in this, your breath may become longer and deeper.

If it helps you any, you can make the exhale longer than the inhale so that all breath is pushed out. This will make the inhale very natural.

## **Mindfulness**

Here's the mindfulness part. Thoughts, emotions and other processes may try to take you away from Zazen. The only way they can take you away from Zazen is if you get caught up in your thoughts and follow them.

Don't do that. Let your thoughts be. Thoughts come and go. Don't engage them. Just allow them to be part of your meditation. You are the impartial observer. They arise and fall like waves on the ocean.

Gently and easily come back to your posture, your hara and your breath. Is your spine still straight? How's the circle you're making with your thumbs?

The hara and the breath are all that exist. If you get distracted again, let the thoughts and emotions arise and fall again. Then, come back to the hara, breath and posture.

That was Zazen meditation, the primary Zen meditation technique. For best results, you want to practice consistently. That means every day, even if you only have five minutes to do it. Consistency is most important.

## **Zen Walking Meditation**

Traditionally, monks do Zen walking meditation in between Zazen sitting meditation sessions. The practice is designed to train the practitioner to integrate meditative awareness into the most mundane activities when they are not on the cushion.

Walking meditation is something you can do indoors or outdoors. You can try Kinhin during your next nature hike for a serenity boost.

Zen walking meditation begins with a mudra, or hand position. There is more than one position that is traditionally used. We'll start with the mudra that seems more popular.

## **Shashu Hand Position**

Form a fist with your left hand and tuck the first section of your thumb into your fist. Your first couple of fingers are wrapped around it.

Place your fist on your solar plexus, the sensitive point just under the bottom ribs. The back of your hand is facing away from your body, and your wrist is touching your body. Your forearm is parallel to the ground or floor.

Take your right hand finger joints that are closest to the palms, and rest them on your left knuckles. Your right fingers are pointing to the left and resting on the back of your left hand. The right fingers and thumbs are together.

Pull your elbows away from the body slightly so that the forearms are parallel with the floor.

To “lock” your forearms into place, you want to rotate your hands slightly upward. Find your comfort zone. For some, the right knuckles will be pointing upward at a 45 degree angle. For others, they will be even more vertical.

With this lock, you should feel like your forearms can easily stay horizontal without much effort.

## **Alternative hand position**

Place your right hand on your solar plexus with fingers pointing to the left. The junction where the fingers meet the palm is centered on the solar plexus.

Place your left hand over your right hand with the fingers pointing to the right. Position it so that you can make a triangle with your thumbs. The thumbs are barely touching. The fingers of each hand are together with no spaces in between.

You can use the same lock that you use with the Shashu mudra to keep the forearms parallel to the floor/ground.

## **How to Do Zen Walking Meditation (more about it)**

Be sure you have space to walk in a fairly good size circle or oval. You probably want ten feet or more in one direction. 100 feet is also great. For long and narrow areas, you'll just need to pivot as efficiently as possible without much interruption.

1. In a standing position, get into one of the two mudras.

2. Stack your vertebrae, one on top of another, all the way up. You will feel like your chin wants to tuck in a little bit to keep the spine vertical.
3. Look downward at roughly a 45 degree angle. The eyes are not focused on anything in particular, so let the gaze soften. You will be more focused on feeling what is going on within.
4. Walk. Put your right foot forward. Land on your heel. Let the ball of your foot touch the ground, then your toes. Repeat for the other foot. You want to become increasingly aware of the heel, ball and toe touching the floor/ground.
5. Pay attention to how you're breathing. Your awareness is focused inward. If thoughts come up, just hang with them. It is OK for them to exist. They are happening in the present moment and should not be resisted. Then, be absorbed in the feeling of the heel, ball, toes and the breath.

Some traditions are very gentle and slow. You walk very slowly while focusing almost entirely on the feeling of your feet making contact with the ground. Others are more brisk with a faster pace. You just need to experiment to find your rhythm.

The length of the stride also varies. You may take baby steps or longer strides.

You can also synchronize your breath with your walking. Breathe through the nose. Lift one foot on the inhale and let it touch the ground on the exhale. Repeat.

There are many Zen monasteries, each with their own methods. The bottom line is that you want to become increasingly intimate with the feeling of your feet making contact with the ground, and you want to be aware of your breath. Regardless of how deep or shallow your breath is, you want to be present with it.

In monastic settings, Zen walking meditation is often performed in groups. The instructions for this are often very formalized.

In groups, practitioners generally form a single file. Some rules require that they walk in a clockwise circle.

If you want to break away to the bathroom and take a squirt, you typically bow to the group and do your business. When you want to re-enter the walking meditation line, you bow again and join the train.

Advanced walking meditation techniques sometimes involve beating each other with pool sticks. This is only for the seasoned initiates, however. Sounds strange, but it is Zen after all.



There is a small chance that I'm making this part up, although it wouldn't be all that surprising if it were true. It's friggin' Zen. You'll just have to look it up.

These are the instructions for the Kinhin Zen walking meditation technique. Despite the formalities, you may notice that the overall concept is very simple. You are easing into the experience of the feet touching the ground and the feeling of the breath.

Practice it alone or with a few of your friends. Ever deepening serenity will follow.

## **How long should you meditate?**

The answer to the first question is different for everyone, though a big factor is the amount of experience you have with meditation.

Beginners are told by some teachers that they should start out at a modest two to five minutes per day just to build a daily habit. As the student becomes used to the meditation, they can increase the amount of time spent meditating.

There are programs such as Transcendental Meditation that recommend that everyone, beginners and advanced students alike, spend twenty minutes twice per day on their practice.

The question of how long to meditate, in my opinion, is trumped by momentum and consistency. Therefore, how often should you meditate is a more important question. Five minutes is just fine as long as you practice every day. Each day builds on the previous day, and the momentum is important. Try to skip as few days as possible.

If you can slip other calming and centering activities into the down times of your day, that momentum will be even better.

I like the idea of aiming for one hour per day, even for beginners. If it gets overwhelming, take breaks during that hour. You can do warm up exercises in between your five, ten or twenty minute sessions.

Warm ups can include stretching, breathing exercises, walking meditations, prayer, chant or anything you find calming and centering. This will enhance your central practice once you go back to it.

Maybe you don't have one hour per day to spend. 5-20 minutes is fine as long as you keep a momentum in your practice. An hour is better in most cases.

This all assumes you meditate once per day. Many teachers also recommend that you meditate twice per day, once in the morning and once at night. If you spend an hour on it, you can break it into two half hour sessions.

## **Can You Meditate Too Much?**

Too much meditation is entirely possible. Meditation opens you to raw experience. It rewires your brain. It builds gray matter and increases the number of synapses that your neurons have. This leads to greater communication between neurons and between the different parts of the brain. There are pitfalls in this process.

You can liken it to lifting weights. Weight lifters tear their muscles, especially beginners. They create chaos in that physiological system.

After some rest, that system reorganizes itself to a higher level of functioning. This comes after some overwhelm.

You need to get the routine right and not overdo it or you can cause some damage. Giving your torn muscles time to repair themselves is essential.

When you meditate too much, you're not giving your nervous system time to reorganize itself in a coherent manner.

Meditation sensitizes you and awakens the brain. You do not want to awaken too quickly.

Just like in the case of weightlifting, you want to experience some overwhelm. However, as mentioned, there are limits.

Autobiography of a Yogi author Paramahansa Yogananda used to recommend a limit of three hours per day in meditation. That is, if my memory serves me correct. This seems like a good rule of thumb, though it still could be too much meditation for some.

Keep an eye on yourself. Watch for too many confusing or scary sensations and thoughts. You may be experiencing too much unresolved emotional material that meditation brings to the surface of the conscious mind. You may also be flooding your system with too much sensory and extrasensory information in general.

Unresolved emotional baggage seeks resolution. An excess amount of this stuff seeking resolution at one time overwhelms your body mind's system beyond its capacity to resolve it.

Watch for excessive spaciness or a sense of ungroundedness in daily life. These can also be signs of too much meditation.

Having any of these symptoms in small amounts is OK and normal if they soon pass. However, too much may be a sign that you need to reduce how long you meditate. In some cases, it could even be an indicator that you should find a different meditation technique.

Don't cut back how often you meditate if you're doing it once or twice per day. Just reduce the time of your sessions. However, there are some cases in which you may need to take a break from your practice and keep grounded instead.

Almost all good things have some element of danger, and meditation is not immune to this principle.

Knowing how much to meditate and how often is not that hard. Just keep an eye on yourself. Meditation is all about doing just that, so you're a step ahead of the game.

## **Summary of what we have precedingly learned:**

### **The Fundamentals of the Third-Eye Activation or Pineal Gland Activation: Scientific Balancing the Endocrine System**

In both Craniosacral Work and Daoist practice, the endocrine system is a critical gateway joining physical function with spiritual experience. The endocrine system includes the following glands: the pituitary, pineal, hypothalamus, thyroid, parathyroid, adrenals, pancreas, and ovaries/testes.

These glands use hormones (rather than the electrical impulses used by the nervous system) to effect changes in our body, emotions, cognition, and energy. Hormones are chemical messengers that circulate through the body via the bloodstream and coordinate critical body functions. They increase or reduce nerve impulses and can also act as neurotransmitters.

The hypothalamus, pituitary, and pineal glands play particularly important roles in spiritual experience and will be explored in greater detail in the sections that follow.

### **The Hypothalamus/Pituitary Relationship**

With access to both the nervous and endocrine systems, the hypothalamus plays a central role in linking the two and in activating the pineal gland. It is also connected with the limbic system, a center for our feelings and emotions. When entrained with the pituitary gland, the hypothalamus therefore has the ability to affect most of the major systems and organ functions in the body as well as our emotions. Together, the hypothalamus and pituitary regulate all of our basic survival processes including body temperature, hunger, thirst, fatigue, growth, sleep, weight, sexual function, pain relief, blood pressure, circadian rhythms, and stress responses such as fight or flight.

The hypothalamus is about the size of an almond and is located just behind the optic chiasm. It secretes neurohormones that communicate with the pituitary

gland, signaling the release or inhibition of key pituitary hormones, which in turn harmonize and activate pineal gland function.

The pituitary gland has two major lobes, which are distinctly different embryologically, anatomically, and functionally. Altogether, the pituitary is about the size of a pea; it sits below the hypothalamus, cradled in the sella turcica of the sphenoid bone. Because the pituitary is enclosed by the sphenoid, it is highly sensitive to misalignments or restrictions in the movement of that bone. If you press your tongue to the roof of your mouth at the soft palate, you are pressing on the underside of the pituitary.

The hypothalamus communicates with the anterior lobe of the pituitary via blood vessels, and connects directly with the posterior lobe through the pituitary stalk or infundibulum. Although the pituitary gland has often been referred to as the master gland because it appears to control the endocrine system, the hypothalamus plays a more crucial role in this system than previously thought. The hypothalamus receives and integrates information from the rest of the body and then secretes the neurohormones that release or inhibit key pituitary hormones. By signaling and directing the pituitary, the hypothalamus plays a critical part in the endocrine system and is important in a larger sense for pineal gland activation.

## **Functions of the Pituitary in Physical Health and Spiritual Awakening**

The anterior lobe of the pituitary secretes seven key hormones that are related to lactation, the release of testosterone, and the production of sex, thyroid, and human growth hormones. The posterior lobe does not produce hormones, but stores and releases two important ones made in the brain: oxytocin and vasopressin. Oxytocin fosters maternal instincts, bonding between mates, trust, and sexual pleasure. Vasopressin influences circadian rhythms, the reabsorption of water into the bloodstream, and also stimulates paternal protective and caring instincts.

The pituitary relates to our growth and its health is also important for pineal gland activation. When it begins to vibrate in synchrony with the pineal gland, we are inspired to grow and renew ourselves both physically and spiritually.

## **The Pineal Gland**

The pineal gland is located in the centre of the brain, behind and above the pituitary gland. Because the pineal is bathed in highly charged cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) and has more blood flow per cubic volume than any other organ, it may well be the gland with the highest concentration of energy in the body. In

addition to its high concentrations of CSF and blood, the pineal gland is also the dominant source of the body's melatonin.

## **Melatonin and the Pineal Gland**

Melatonin is significant for its effects on our mood, immune function, circadian rhythms, and the quality and quantity of our sleep. Melatonin is known as an anti-aging and anti-stress agent because it both suppresses cortisol and is a powerful antioxidant.

The production of melatonin by the pineal gland is activated by darkness and inhibited by light. Once released, melatonin circulates through the brain via the CSF and enters nearby blood vessels for distribution to the rest of the body. When melatonin levels are disrupted, people can experience mood swings, depression, and seasonal disorders.

## **Serotonin and other Consciousness Enhancing Neurochemicals secreted by the Pineal Gland**

In addition to producing melatonin, a healthy, activated pineal gland also metabolizes other neurochemicals that coordinate physical and emotional processes on a cellular level. These neurochemicals, including pinoline and DMT, are said to connect the mind and body. The pineal plays a key role in the production of these neurochemicals because it has one of the highest concentrations of serotonin in the body, and serotonin is a critical precursor to them.

## **Spiritual Aspects of the Pineal Gland**

Given its important role, it is not surprising that a healthy, activated pineal gland has been connected with spirituality for millennia. Its pinecone shape is found in art and artefacts of many ancient traditions, where it is associated with enlightenment and immortality. Ancient Egyptians revered this tiny gland and even preserved it separately during the process of mummification.

With its spines and spirals, the pinecone illustrates a perfect Fibonacci sequence—symbolizing growth and the unifying force that underlies creation, all embodied in an activated pineal gland.

## **The Pineal Gland: Key to Opening the Third Eye**

Spiritual traditions associate and activate pineal gland with the opening of the third eye of inner vision, insight, and wisdom. Scientific research is beginning to validate the relationship between the pineal gland and vision: comparative research into the anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry of the pineal gland and the retina across a wide range of animal species suggests that the two organs

share evolutionary and developmental paths. Modern living fossils such as the tuatara have a photosensitive pineal eye with a rudimentary lens, cornea, and retina. Other species such as frogs and lampreys also have pineal eyes. In humans, pineal cells resemble retinal cells in composition and in the presence of proteins not found elsewhere in the body. Pineal light sensitivity is common across diverse species and in humans is connected with the opening of the third eye.

## **Melatonin and the Spirit Molecules**

In terms of spiritual experience, melatonin quiets the body and mind, allowing access to higher consciousness. Both pinoline and DMT, secreted by a healthy, activated pineal gland, are psychoactive, causing changes in perception, mood, consciousness, cognition, and behavior. Pinoline enables visions and dream states in the conscious mind and has been used by ancient Egyptians and Zoroastrians in their rituals. It assists in DNA replication and is said to resonate with the pulse of life at ~8 cycles per second.

DMT is produced in the pineal gland during deep meditation and extraordinary conditions of birth, sexual ecstasy, extreme physical stress, and near-death experiences. It also alters our dream consciousness when it is released into the bloodstream during the Rapid Eye Movement phase of sleep. DMT links the body and spirit because of its relationship to -visionary experiences and non-ordinary states of transcendent consciousness. Dr. Rick Strassman calls DMT the Spirit Molecule.

## **The Pineal Gland and Vibration**

The activated pineal gland can also influence our experience through vibration. As we saw earlier with the heart, rhythmic vibrations can have a powerful effect on our cognition, emotions, and physical state. We know this intuitively, and we experience it directly when we sense the effects that music has on our mood, memory, and physiology. In the early 1980s, the French musician Fabien Maman researched the effect of sound vibrations on cells; he found that sounds can destroy cancer cells and invigorate healthy ones. Today, it is common for parents to play classical music to stimulate brain development in their children before and after birth.

Rhythm entrainment, also called resonance, happens when two wave forms begin to oscillate together at exactly the same rate. When the hypothalamus and pituitary entrain with the pulsing vibration of the pineal gland, our whole system can shift toward harmony.

Daoists believe that the North Star is the source of the original pulse. Vibrations from this star were crucial in the evolution of the first forms of life on Earth. It is

said that Earth's ability to support life is related to the planet's tilt toward the North Star (rather than being oriented directly toward the sun). This orientation maximizes the habitable surface and optimizes the environment for plant and animal life. Because of the North Star's strong power and influence, many Qi Gong exercises intentionally connect with the North Star. According to Daoists, the North Star emits pulsing vibrations which affect and activate the pineal gland. When the pineal gland pulses in synchrony with the North Star, it receives cosmic information and relays it to the hypothalamus and pituitary through resonance. In turn, they send messages to the heart which communicates with the rest of the body through its own electromagnetic pulsing.

## **Magnetic Fields and the Pineal Gland**

Besides being sensitive to light and vibration, the pineal gland activates in part due to exposure to magnetic fields. Studies with birds and other animals conclude that the pineal gland monitors magnetic fields and assists the body in -orienting in space, by acting as a navigational centre. This magneto-receptive capacity also explains why geomagnetic storms and environmental stress can affect the pineal gland, leading to problems with circadian rhythms and melatonin secretion.

As we discussed earlier, the heart generates a strong electromagnetic field that permeates the whole body. When the heart is activated with the high frequencies of love and compassion, its electromagnetic field is amplified and expanded. The pineal gland's sensitivity to electromagnetic energy causes it to begin vibrating and activating in concert with the heart. As these two organs entrain together, their high vibration opens the third eye to greater inspiration, intuition, and inner vision. Because of the pineal gland's connection with spatial orientation and circadian rhythms, our perception of space and time often shifts when the pineal is in a highly aroused state. Such experiences have been mentioned by meditators and Chi Kung practitioners for millennia, and research is now providing explanations for these phenomena.

## **The Crystal Palace - Hypothalamus, Pituitary, and Pineal**

In Daoist practices, the region of the brain bounded by the pineal, the pituitary, and hypothalamus glands is called the Crystal Palace. The Crystal Palace sits between the left and right hemispheres of the brain and between the forebrain of reason and the hind brain of instinct. Many meditation practices mention the Crystal Palace, but some people have difficulty sensing it because these structures are inside the skull and cannot be touched directly.

However, with a little practice, it is simple to connect with and activate these spiritual glands through our awareness and intention. The location of the pineal gland is often described as the centre of the head—it is at the level of the

eyebrows, above and behind the pituitary and hypothalamus. Behind the eyes, the optic nerves cross at the optic chiasm. Below the optic chiasm is the pituitary gland, which sits in the sella turcica of the sphenoid. Above and behind the optic chiasm is the hypothalamus.

## **The Pineal Gland and its Relationship with Light**

All three glands of the Crystal Palace are extremely sensitive and responsive to light. Prior to 2002, science was aware of two forms of light receptors in the eye: cones (for colour vision) and rods (for low light vision). In 2002, however, scientists discovered a third -photoreceptor: cells in the retina that contain a light-sensitive pigment called melanopsin. These cells send messages to the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN) of the hypothalamus. The SCN is responsible for controlling circadian rhythms, which influence our sleep, alertness, hormones, temperature, and digestive functions.

When the hypothalamus receives information about the presence or absence of light, it signals the pineal gland to activate and to start or inhibit cortisol and melatonin production. Variation in melatonin levels causes a cascade of changes in the SCN, pituitary, and retina. The pituitary also responds to light through its release of vasopressin, which influences the SCN to adjust our circadian clock.

In addition to the light detected by our eyes, studies now show that the whole body acts as a light receptor. Light shining on any part of the body can be detected, signalling the SCN and pineal gland to shut down melatonin production. Because there is so much ambient light these days, our systems rarely receive the deep relaxation that occurs in total darkness. Many people find that removing light sources from the bedroom can be helpful in optimizing sleep cycles, improving general health and powerfully stimulating pineal gland activation and rebalancing.

## **Qi Gong Practices for Activating the Pineal Gland and Harmonizing the Crystal Palace**

Many Chi Kung (also known as Qi Gong) practices contain simple elements like breathing or tapping that can be used to activate the bones and glands of the Crystal Palace.

### **1. Breathing**

Various breath practices move the pumps, activating the pineal and pituitary glands as well as stimulating the flow of cerebrospinal fluid. Breathing is said to ionize the CSF and therefore increase its potency.



## **2. Tapping**

Gently tapping your forehead in between your eyebrows activates the pineal gland and all three structures of the Crystal Palace. The vibration sends a wave directly back to the pineal gland, activating it in the process. The same vibration also moves through the bones to the sphenoid, which in turn stimulates the pituitary gland that rests in the sella -turcica. The vibration of the pituitary awakens the hypothalamus through the pituitary stalk.

## **3. Toning**

Toning or chanting sends vibrations into the Crystal Palace, activating the pineal and other glands and energizing the CSF. Chanting the eight forces of the pakua to draw in elemental energies is an exceptionally powerful exercise for activating the Crystal Palace.

## **4. Pressing**

Pressing your tongue to the roof of your mouth activates the pituitary gland and, through its physical and chemical connections, activated the pineal gland and hypothalamus as well.

## **5. Squeezing**

When we squeeze our eyes, the muscular connection with the sphenoid activates the pituitary. Sucking in our cheeks moves the jaw, which stimulates the neck and cranial pumps. Contracting the anal sphincter and perineum sends vibrations to the muscles that envelop the anus and form the pelvic floor. From the pelvis, the vibration then travels up the spine and dural tube to the occiput. The intracranial membrane system transfers the vibration to the center of the head, activating the pineal and pituitary glands.

## **6. Spiralling**

Spiralling movements such as spinning the pakua, the Tai Chi symbol, or our Dantians creates an electromagnetic field that energizes the CSF and enhances the power of the heart field, thereby activating the pineal gland and other glands of the Crystal Palace.

## **7. Being in Darkness**

Darkness triggers increased production and release of melatonin, and eventually of pinoline and DMT as a result of its effect of activating the pineal gland and helping to stimulate function of and open the third eye.

## **8. Laughing and Smiling**

Smiling opens both the heart and the crown, allowing more light to penetrate while also increasing the vibration of the organs. Laughing and smiling reduce stress and relax the body, which increases the flow of chi. Laughter also triggers the release of endorphins, promoting feelings of well-being. Relaxation increases blood flow, which amplifies the effects of the hormones released in the Crystal Palace and has an effect of pineal gland activation.

## **9. Focusing**

Since energy flows where our attention goes, bringing our attention to the structures of the Crystal Palace will activate them.

**Note:** The Tao also emphasizes the importance of good diet and hydration. We are 70–80 percent water, and water is highly conductive. To increase the activation of the pineal gland and the Crystal Palace, sufficient hydration is critical. Additionally, a good, balanced diet high in tryptophan is helpful in providing the building blocks for these important biochemicals. Tryptophan is plentiful in many foods including chocolate, seaweed, almonds, bananas, dried dates, sesame seeds, chickpeas, and peanuts.

Spinal Cord Breathing: The Ultimate Practice for Spiritual Activation and Awakening

## **Chi Kung through the Eyes of Craniosacral Science**

To understand how profound these Chi Kung practices are and how they kindle a natural spiritual experience and pineal gland activation without the use of substances, herbs and other less organic methods, let us look at what happens with the Spinal Cord Breathing exercise we will be introducing further on in this article.

As we practice Spinal Cord Breathing, the rhythmic pulsing of the spinal cord creates an electromagnetic field that charges the cerebrospinal fluid and enhances the circulation of this important fluid throughout the body, resulting in pineal gland activation. Increased flow shifts the electrolyte balance, the means by which the CSF regulates the body's ability to conduct electricity. The greater the conductivity, the more energy can flow through the nervous system, charging the cells and priming them for activation. Any psychoactive substances (such as DMT) that are released by the activated pineal gland also enter into the CSF, charging it even further.

In Spinal Cord Breathing, the movement of the sacrum transfers vibration up the spine and to the occiput through the dural tube. Connected with the occiput at

the sphenobasilar joint (SBJ), the sphenoid also begins to vibrate, stimulating the pituitary. At the same time, the rocking wavelike movement of the pituitary stalk activates the hypothalamus and milks the pituitary gland, which as we know is connected to the health and activation of the pineal gland. The milking of the pituitary releases more oxytocin and vasopressin, which heighten feelings of trust, relaxation, peace, and empathy while reducing fear, anxiety, and aggression.

The pituitary gland is located above the sphenoid sinus, which drains almost directly down the throat. During high levels of excitement, CSF may be excreted into the sphenoid sinus. Here, vasopressin and oxytocin mix with the already highly charged CSF and drip down into the throat, giving us the nectar (frequently referred to as Soma) that is often described in spiritual experiences. Both vasopressin and oxytocin are critical hormones during the birth process; their presence in the nectar may contribute to birth-like experiences. The effects of these hormones on bonding may also explain the feeling of deep connection and unconditional love that is part of many enlightenment experiences.

This potent brew travels down the back of the throat and into the stomach, where it is absorbed directly through the mucous membranes. Some of this fluid also enters the bloodstream later in the digestive process. In this way, the nectar is brought to the lower Dantian for integration into the physical body, uniting heaven and earth.

During spiritual experiences, the activated pineal gland affects the rest of the brain through its influence on CSF, which completely immerses both the brain and the spinal cord. After bathing the brain, approximately half of the CSF gets reabsorbed into the bloodstream in the head. The other half leaves the head through lymphatic drainage. From the lymph, the supercharged CSF enters the body's bloodstream and is carried to the heart. Blood flows through the heart and vessels in a spiral motion, boosting the CSF's electromagnetic charge. These neural, biochemical, and electromagnetic connections between the brain and heart may lead to ecstatic heart-mind expanding sensations.

The heart field is the strongest electromagnetic field of the body: when consciousness moves from the head to the heart, the field becomes stronger and more organized. When the head resonates with the heart's vibration, neurons in the brain fire differently, reducing mind chatter, increasing the communication between mind and body and inducing further pineal gland activation. Thus, during spiritual experiences, the liquid-light ambrosia of the CSF is active in all three Dantians, enhancing their powers. Because the pineal gland is itself bathed in CSF, there can be a self-amplifying positive feedback loop that creates peak experiences. Moreover, since the heart field extends and can be felt at least ten

feet from the body, our experiences also have the potential for a ripple effect to our communities.

## **Lights and Music**

Research by neurosurgeon Wilder Penfield reported in 1958 that stimulation of the right temporal lobe of the brain led to patients reporting spiritual experiences such as seeing God, leaving their bodies, hearing music, and seeing the dead. Since then, studies by Peter Fenwick and Vernon Neppe also show connections between mystical experiences and the temporal lobes. Although the exact mechanism by which the temporals are stimulated is not yet known, it may be that the CSF present in the interpeduncular cistern situated between the temporal lobes may be involved.

A structure called the colliculus helps to orient the head to what is seen or heard. It receives visual and auditory stimuli and has sensorimotor connections to assist with orienting movement. It surrounds the pineal gland and is activated by its secretions. As the pineal awakens, releasing biochemicals such as serotonin, tryptamine, pinoline, melatonin, or DMT, it affects the colliculus, which can explain some of the lights, visions, and celestial music that people report when the third eye is open and the Crystal Palace is active.

## **Awakening the Core Link between the Cranium and Sacrum**

Earlier we mentioned the soft tissue dura mater connection between the cranium and the sacrum—the Core Link. For good flow in the physical body, there must be good connection and communication between heaven (the cranium) and earth (the sacrum). Spinal Cord Breathing is one of the best ways to awaken this connection and keep it healthy and also has the added effect of inducing pineal gland activation.

Spinal Cord Breathing enlivens the spine, promotes good range of motion and flexibility, activates the cranial and sacral pumps, and enhances the flow of cerebral spinal fluid, which in turn stimulates pineal gland activation. It also helps to relax the back muscles so meditation is comfortable, and increases the flow of chi through the spine.

In modern life, many people work at a desk and sit for many hours a day. Additionally, many people also sit watching television or playing on the internet once they are home. So much sitting hinders the motion of the sacrum and reduces Flow. Spinal Cord Breathing is a great way to counteract the ill effects of prolonged sitting.

## **U Spinal Cord Breathing**

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and your knees slightly bent.

2. Relax, and begin to notice how you feel.
3. Begin natural breathing.
4. On your next inhalation, keeping your elbows bent and your fingers toward the sky, bring your arms level with your shoulders and pulled slightly back. Gently tilt your sacrum backward, arching your spine. Open your chest and allow the rib cage to expand, activating the thymus and adrenal glands. Allow your head to drop backward and allow your jaw to soften.
5. As you exhale, tilt your sacrum forward, tucking your tailbone and rounding your spine as if curling into a ball. Bring your elbows together in front of your chest, and let your chin drop toward your chest as you lightly clench your teeth.
6. Repeat 9 or 18 times, then return your head and spine to neutral and rest.

**Shakti and Shaktipat Initiation**  
**or**  
**Shambhavia Mudra Awakening Transmission**  
**the Meditation Alternative**



I am adding very carefully information around the transmission of spiritual power(s) through laying on hands by a guru, better known as he or she calls themselves, a “realized guru”, but is that really so? That is the question every seeker should be aware of. Investigate before trusting anyone.

There are so many "Gurus" out there and everywhere, claiming they can pass on Shakti or enlightenment or kundalini to their disciples through either being prayed to or by merely touching them, better known by laying-on-hands as they do in Catholic and Orthodox Churches in the lineage of the apostle Peter or any other of the twelve apostles more than two-thousand years ago. In many cases the Guru will say he or she (strangely enough there are many female Gurus who claim this) will do it at no charge at all. These Gurus live in rather big houses, through the many donations they get. Most of these gurus are pressing their disciples to donate. I know a few of them myself, as one living in New York having world-wide meditation centres. At the end of previous century I went as far as Edinburgh (Scotland) to meet a guru as described above (not to receive Shakti, but to gather information). In Belgium too the organisers were and still are begging money for the guru, at the least of every possible opportunity as for the guru's birthday or for being so many years in the West, and so on and forth. I was an older man in a group of young people, all the disciples being young and still studying, with very little money, causing as such serious problems when a gift was demanded. Obedience to the guru never lasted long anyway. Even I, was not prepared to give money all the time and at all circumstances. Sometimes, it was just shocking, always money. They never had enough, always asking for more donations. In Edinburgh, the guru was surrounded by beautiful ladies and guardians, taken around in a beautiful car. He called the ladies, "my daughters". His daughters were mostly Americans. The Hindu guru is still active.

I do not believe that Shakti can be passed to people through veneration of a guru or by his touch - I further don't believe anybody who says they are enlightened either. The only way to reach enlightenment is through our personal efforts, and this is why I am teaching meditation free of charge, exempt of all donations. I don't want money for spiritual and charitable service. Never did and never will.

## **What is Meditation?**

Simply, meditation is to do nothing by any means i.e. by mind and body. To do nothing means relaxing your mind and body consciously. We mainly think that meditation is concentration. In Concentration, you have to do some activity. While in meditation, we have to be inactive. When we concentrate then 90 % of world disappears. Meditation means total consciousness, in meditation thoughtless stage is achieved by witnessing (Do not react i.e. do not involve) thoughts, body and respiration.

By daily meditation, one can overcome depression and many psychosomatic diseases. Meditation brings happiness and a happy mind brings good health. In thoughtless awareness he gets direct guidance to his or others problems. By meditation anger depression and negative thoughts disappears gradually. He

accepts any condition he become psychiatrist he has wider perspective. This meditation also increases vital Prana energy of the person and clears blockages in all chakras.

## **How to reach self-realisation? Important**

Self-realization is what it is all about.

Self-realization means, of course, to realize the Self. This is very different from realizing the small self, or achieving self-actualization. In fact in Self-realization, you step out of the small self forever. There are two distinct types of Self-realization: one without love, peace and bliss and one with. In a strict evolutionary progression love, peace and bliss comes after void.

## **The Self-realization project**

Getting Self-realized is the project of a lifetime. It is not something you just do at a couple of "spiritual" weekend seminars and then forget about. You will know when you are stuck in this project, because you will intuitively know that there is a Pure Self that is really you, and you will not rest, ever, until you merge with it.

## **Preparatory stage. Temporary witnessing**

Witnessing is different from self-observation. In self-observation the subject objectifies itself (looks at itself) and this is something everybody can do. In witnessing you step temporarily out of the subject and near into pure being (but not quite). It is characterized by being a witness to your small self, but not yet having consciously realized your real Self in oneness with it. Practicing "being in the now" is an attempt to reach this temporary witnessing (this practice cannot take you further into Self-realization). One could say all meditative practices seek this witnessing-state one way or another, and when you have a good meditation, this is the stage of temporary freedom you reach. If you want to go beyond that, you have to leave the meditation practice behind at just the right moment and merge with the Self. Some meditations may be ecstatic and give rise to cosmic orgasms, but they are not necessarily deeper into the Self. Bliss and ecstasy signify a sudden arousal of kundalini and a rush of Shakti through your system. Your bliss may be true love, peace, bliss. To give you a hint about what is what, know that first there is love, then there is peace, bliss and ecstasy, then there is silence in pure being, then there is love-bliss which is both more intense than bliss and ecstasy, yet totally calm and unmoving since it is the unmanifest Self and is causeless and without an object. You do not need ecstatic experiences to reach Self-realization as Pure Being without love, peace and bliss. But there is no benefit in not developing the bliss of Shakti prior to merging with the Self, on the contrary. Some maintain bliss is a distraction, I say

it is not as simple as that, because if the bliss is a symptom of an awakened kundalini, then merge with the bliss by all means and you will reach not only basic Self-realization sooner, but also move on from there sooner.

### **The witnessing state**

It is possible to reach a state of freedom from identification with the "I", where the identification-mechanism is crushed, yet you are not Self-realized. This is the witnessing-state. It is the I AM-ness state, where one knows oneself to be nobody, but the most subtle I-ness has not been dissolved. It is easy to believe this state is Self-realization, since there are no identifications, one witnesses everything, and one has realized oneself as nothing (nobody). But this state is characterized by a duality between self-as-nobody and everything else, and as such it is truly witnessing everything. The self-as-nobody has a very, very subtle sense of being nobody (nothing), and one truly is nobody (nothing), but there still remains an unmanifest sense of I-ness. There will be a sense of "I am nothingness", thus the I is unmanifest. This is the basic I-ness principle. This I-ness is the root of ignorance.

Once I-ness goes away for ever, you are Self-realized. Self-realization can be without bliss or it can be with bliss, but it is the same basic freedom from I-ness and oneness with the Self.

### **Dark Night of the Mind -- Dark Night of the Soul**

As witnessing becomes more frequent and deepens, then you enter the Dark night of the Mind. This is what most people call the Dark Night of the Soul, however, it is more a transformation of the mind than of the soul. In this phase you are constantly confronted with how inadequately you understand what Self-realization is, and you have to constantly admit mental defeat. Ultimately the Dark Night of the Mind is the mind's and the I's fight against you getting free of identification with them. The mind will conceal this fight as an attempt to understand Self-realization, but basically it is keeping you in bondage. So in this phase you have to relentlessly tell the mind that it cannot grasp what Self-realization is, yet you must try your best to understand. This paradoxical situation is frustrating. You think, you've got it, but then you realize you haven't. On a deeper level, you have meditative experiences which may linger on for a long time in everyday life, and this may trick you to believe you've got it, but this belief is the mind also. Know one thing for sure: If there is ANY sense of an I that has it, you haven't got it. This does not mean that every trace of personality (the I) should vanish, it means that there is no identification and that there is no I-ness left. Only I-ness and identification vanish. After they are gone the I is seen as an empty shell, like a body you are incarnated in.



## **Witnessing or ecstasy are not spiritual enlightenment**

As you meditate, you will experience various states of consciousness -- and again and again you will think: "Ah! This is IT!". It may be Pure Being or ecstatic oceans of love, peace or bliss. These states may be flashes or they may hang on for days or weeks. But they will eventually go away as long as the identification mechanism is intact and you haven't removed the basic I-ness. So, how do you break the identification mechanism? The only way is to merge with the Self. This means you will have to meditate every day. Just going about your everyday life trying to be in the now, Eckhart Tolle-style, will simply not do, for this will never make the basic I-ness vanish. At best it will put you in temporary states of witnessing, but this is so far removed from Self-realization, that it is barely worth mentioning.

Oneness with the Self can be so complete that you lose consciousness (Nirvikalpa Samadhi). When you come out of this Samadhi, you will realize that something is very different and you will feel great joy. One day you will come out of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, regain consciousness and discover there is no longer an ego to come back to. When this happened to me some years ago, I did not even know my name, age or date for a whole day. In fact, I didn't even know I did not know, until someone asked me what my name was and how old I was, and I could not even answer. Fortunately personality and personal history returned, but I-ness never returned and the identification mechanism was gone. This state of freedom comes in an instant. It is either there or it is not; there is no in-between. You are not more or less free; that is not how it works. But when freedom comes, it may not be dramatic and can even be so subtle, you don't notice what really happened until much later, when the fact can't be denied anymore.

## **Self-realization. Nothingness-being. Freedom. Pure Being**

Self-realization is a state of total freedom from the small I where even the primal I-ness has gone (and the witness in witnessing is gone). We call this stage Self-realization because here the I-ness (and the identification mechanism which depends upon I-ness) is gone and you have attained oneness with the Self as pure being. Here there is no longer a sense of being nobody or being nothing. There simply is pure being. There is no point of awareness, for pure being is awareness without a source. In witnessing there is still a sense of being an awareness. One is not (yet) blissful. In its purity it is a peaceful state, but when you move on it can get very complicated. It takes a long time to bring IT into manifestation in everyday living. In other words, you have attained a state of freedom, but not yet found the love-peace-bliss. You have stepped out of illusion and into pure being, but not yet into recognizing this pure being in everything around you. When the Self recognizes the Self in everything it is

love, peace, bliss. But in pure Self-realization, such a recognition is not (yet) present. Here there is non-duality in the Self, but duality between inner and outer (unmanifest and manifest).

Plain Self-realization is the death of the small self that was produced by identification with something that is not Self. But the personality does not vanish, it's just not you anymore. Some say the ego has to go away; that is a matter of definition: if you maintain the personality is the ego, then the ego will remain, if you maintain the ego is the sense of I (I-ness), then yes, ego will vanish.

## **From Pure Being to non-dual love-peace-bliss**

Once you are free of I-ness and identification, it is Self-realization. This does not mean you have got rid of the small self; you have just got out of it by merging with the Self. In fact the small self will feel all the more present as an empty shell and you will probably want to work hard to get rid of it.

If you have not experienced any love-peace-bliss at this point, you will probably be quite content with this state and live happily in it for many years. If, however, you have experienced supreme love-peace-bliss, you will feel an emptiness and a very strong longing to merge with the supreme love-peace-bliss. You may project this longing for supreme love-bliss onto the Supreme and thus long intensely for the Universal Mind, but in reality it is a longing for the supreme love-peace-bliss of the Self. Of course, at this point "Divine Mind, the Supreme" has a completely different meaning than ever before, but that is a little difficult to put into words here.

At this stage, if you want to move on, you simply have to awaken and arouse kundalini and merge into oneness with Shakti on all levels of consciousness and also of the body. When kundalini reaches the heart, you will overflow with love, when it reaches the brain, you will be one with love-peace-bliss and will recognize the Self in everything.

## **Dark Night of the Soul**

The period of transformation from pure nothingness-being to non-dual love, peace, bliss can last a long time and cause many frustrations. It is the real Dark Night of the Soul. I lived in this state 23 years and suffered a lot because of it -- also because nobody could tell me, what was going on and nobody respected my state and I was very lonely in a spiritual sense. So there was a lot of social frustration and loneliness. Ironically you are also free from suffering since you are no longer identified with the sufferer. You are of course a permanent witness, much as in the witness-state, though now there is no sense of being a witness.

Basically this phase is a period where the consciousness, you have stepped out of, disintegrates and become transparent. The goal is non-duality with respect to inner and outer, and in order to reach that, anything that hinders the Self from recognizing the Self in everything else, must dissolve. Here kundalini is your greatest ally. Some may fear kundalini because it to them at first seems to be a destructive energy. But what it destroys is ignorance, and as its process progresses, kundalini will manifest as love-bliss. When kundalini finally settles in the brain, you will be living in perpetual love-peace-bliss and realize this to be the Self.

### **Self-recognition. Love-peace-bliss**

In the primal stage you have pure being which is empty and is not yet realized as what it is: pure bliss (sat-chit-ananda). Second stage begins to unfold only after kundalini has awakened. It is not possible to attain supreme love-peace-bliss without arousing kundalini and merging it in the brain. A major part of kundalini has to reach the brain and stay there for good by merging with the Self. This means you need to develop and purify kundalini's passage up to the brain. Once kundalini settles in the brain, then the remaining unfoldment will go on by itself and there is no need for meditation. This is a state of perpetual bliss. You never lose the bliss, though it may wax and wane for various reasons. You don't even lose it while sleeping..

In this stage of Self-realization, you see the supreme Self in everything and this recognition is non-dual love, peace, bliss. It is non-dual because the Self within, the recognition and the Self without are the same. This unity, we know, is love, peace, bliss.

Now, since some karma is intact, there is still a personality hanging around, though you know it is not you of course. You will, after Self-realization, observe the personality do some strange and silly things and react in ways, that may seem unworthy of love-peace-bliss. That is just karma unfolding and part of the process of the final breakdown of residual "ignorance". As that process goes on, the love-peace-bliss takes you over completely. Later love, peace, bliss may temporarily recede to the background because some transformation is going on inside. So even at this stage love, peace, bliss is not stable.

Just as suddenly as freedom from the small "self" came about and I-ness vanished, you will suddenly find your kundalini does not leave the brain and you are constantly in a state of love-bliss. This can come as a major breakthrough or it can come rather unnoticed since kundalini may have been in the brain most of the time anyway, so you will only realize after some time that it is a permanent change. But one thing will not go unnoticed, and that is the flash of energy in the brain as kundalini makes the brain its new abode. You will feel the crown

chakra opening and as if a million bubbles are exploding inside the brain. And most importantly you will feel like the brain dissolves into Shakti. When you open your eyes after that meditation, you will see the Self in everything around you. So it comes in a flash, but since you may be so used to love-bliss by now, and so used to losing it again, you may expect to lose this also. But one sweet day, it will not leave you anymore.

### **In fact, what is Shakti do you remember?**

In Hindu philosophy Shakti is represented as the consort of Shiva, Shakti is inseparable from Shiva. It could be said that Shiva is the universe, Shakti is the living intelligence embedded within the universe. It is the work of Shakti to awaken Kundalini and guide the kundalini through the chakras to its final goal by its own perfect means.

It is said that Shakti looks after the new initiate as if it were the initiates mother. In the path of Shaktipat, Shakti is often referred to as “Mother Shakti” or “Mata Shakti”. The new initiate will experience what this means for themselves. Shakti is a conscious, self-directing force that is the intelligence of nature. Indeed, all natures manifestations, be they a blade of grass, a leaf, flower, plant or the universe itself are all manifestations of Shakti, either involved within form or manifest as the self-directing life principle. Shakti controls prana and directs it to its purpose.

### **What is Shaktipat Diksha in the Hindu Tradition?**

Shaktipat Diksha is the transmission of a living intelligent force from Initiator to Candidate. “Shakti” is the conscious, living, intelligent force. “Pat” means to transfer or pass down. “Diksha” means to initiate so “Shaktipat Diksha” is the passing or transmitting of a conscious living force or energy from initiator to initiate. This is exactly what is said of an apostolic consecration we talked about earlier, from an apostle of the apostolic age through Catholic or Orthodox bishops to newly consecrated bishops up to this day.

Shaktipat awakens the dormant energy of Kundalini and directs its ascent through the chakras. The process is wholly automatic, the initiate does not need to learn any method to control the kundalini or direct it to a particular chakra. This is the immense benefit of Shaktipat.

Due to the effects of Shaktipat the workings of Kundalini may sometimes be felt throughout the entire nervous system all of the day and night, depending on the function it is performing at that particular time. In Hindu teachings there are other types of “diksha’s” or initiations, these are formalities in religious ceremonies and should not be confused with Shaktipat Diksha.

## **What Shaktipat is not?**

Shaktipat is the transmission of a conscious, living, intelligent force that is self-directing and operates wholly independent of both the initiators and initiates mind. Shakti is not a blind energy that is wilfully directed here or there. Healing practices or ‘energy work’ that use consciously directed Chi or Prana should not be confused with Shaktipat.

There are many offers of “Shaktipat”, for fee, donations or among the sincere gurus for free, both on and off the web. One should be careful as to whether it is truly Shaktipat or prana transmissions that are being offered, in the majority of cases it is prana transmissions and not Shaktipat. One famous (deceased) guru offered Shaktipat but had himself never received Diksha. In the years gone by, I even knew someone who invented “Egyptian Healing.”

## **What is Diksha?**

Diksha (Sanskrit: दीक्षा in Devanagari, dīkṣā, Tamil: தீட்சை) also spelled deeksha or deeksa in common usage, translated as a "preparation or consecration for a religious ceremony", is giving of a mantra or an initiation by the guru in Indian religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. Diksha is given in a one-to-one ceremony, and typically includes the taking on of a serious spiritual discipline. The word is derived from the Sanskrit root dā ("to give") plus kṣi ("to destroy") or alternately from the verb root dīkṣ ("to consecrate"). When the mind of the guru and the disciple become one, then we say that the disciple has been initiated by the guru.

Diksha can be of various types, through the teacher's sight, touch, or word, with the purpose of purifying the disciple or student. Initiation by touch is called sparśa dīkṣā. The bestowing of divine grace through diksha is sometimes called śaktipāt.

## **What's the difference between Shaktipat and Prana transmission?**

Shaktipat is easily confused with prana transmissions, as is evident across the web. To put it in easily understandable terms prana is like a powerful blind man whilst Shakti is his guide. Prana is subtle energy that can be focused by anyone, the more training one has the more intense the prana transmission is. Channelling and conveying prana can be useful in itself and can boost spiritual development at certain times on certain occasions, with certain practices, but its uses are limited and it eventually dissipates.

Shakti, on the other hand works within the recipient directing prana to where it needs to go. Shakti does this when the initiate is waking, dreaming or in deep sleep, time is no barrier to the effects of Shakti. It is as if a guru were installed

within the subtle body of its recipient and it undertakes specific tasks by directing prana, on behalf of the initiate with the same intelligence that produced nature and the universe. It does not dissipate (unless the initiate ignores both Shakti and its processes) but grows stronger with time. It seems, in years to come Shakti grows stronger and stronger whilst prana transmissions have long been forgotten.

### **Who can give the kind of Initiation?**

Shaktipat can be likened to one lighted candle lighting an unlit candle. The lit candle flame loses nothing by lighting the second candle making it like itself. One who has yet to light their own candle cannot light another. Many people imagine that all gurus use Shaktipat initiation to assist their students (Sadhaks), this is not the case. Most gurus have their own well developed path and lineage. They may use prana transmissions to assist their Sadhaks but if they themselves were not initiated into Shaktipat Diksha they are unable to offer it to their own Sadhaks.

Like in an Apostolic Succession, the initiator must have been previously initiated by someone who has also undergone the same initiation process. It is impossible for initiation to take place otherwise. Shakti can only be successfully transmitted when the initiators Kundalini has been sufficiently aroused and stabilized. This can be a relatively short period or it could take many years depending on the initiates progression.

However, Shaktipat is not to be compared an apostolic succession consecration. No. real Shaktipat initiation can in any way be associated with any lineage, religion, cult or organization.

The usual view of Shaktipat is that Shakti is the Sat-Guru, the inner teacher and the source of the initiates experiences, not the initiator. Of course, it is part of an initiated sincere work to offer advice, encouragement and support not only on the spiritual aspect of meditation but also the transcendental aspect too where necessary.

### **Shaktipat is no religion**

Shaktipat is the path of experience, not theory, dogma or religion, as for meditation you are not required to believe in anything. Kundalini awakening occurs in initiation regardless of whatever beliefs are held. Shakti and Shaktipat are to be experienced in the privacy of one's own practice, not believed. Your earnest and persevering meditation Shaktipat can also be experienced. This is my view.

## **Shaktipat is not a form of possession**

Definitely not, though it can sometimes appear as such. Shaktipat Diksha is the transmission of a conscious living force, it is not an entity. It's job is to awaken and guide the Kundalini within that is most intimately 'ourselves', more 'ourselves' than the vagaries of mind. However, be sincere, who can tell that a transmission has taken place. An imposition of hands is one thing, but further spiritual development is another. Take Shaktipat Diksha as a start, not an end.

## **What about imparting mantras!**

Mantras are sometimes given to manually awaken kundalini in non-Shaktipat methods (mantra yoga) or by some initiators to trigger the process of Shaktipat initiation in other systems. However I would not give mantras at initiation or at any other time in the process of ones sadhana or spiritual development. I find it quite unnecessary as my method of initiation works very well with a high success rate. Also, when kundalini is sufficiently aroused mantras may begin automatically, by themselves with no effort from the initiate or the initiator.

## **Do I need to be celibate or a renunciator for the Shaktipat to take effect?**

No, of course not, though one should ideally devote sufficient practice time for results to develop. Shaktipat is ideal for householders with families, however the more time devoted to practice the more intense the results are felt. The effects of Shaktipat take place regardless of ones status in life, what one is doing or where one is located - at home or work, even whether one is awake or asleep makes no difference whatsoever to the awakening power within.

## **How many initiations do I need?**

One single initiation is all the candidate needs and all the sincere initiator uses. Lapsed practitioners may apply for booster sessions if they have let their practice go but further work is simply a repeat of the original initiation process. Apparently there are other systems that are also referred to as 'Shaktipat' where more than one initiation takes place. This initiator does not use them.

## **Am I required to maintain an association with the initiator after initiation?**

It is not mandatory but highly advisable. Continued association is via private or group contact where initiates are advised on how best to cultivate the experience and offered encouragement. You are free to come or go as you so choose.

However, I do suggest all new initiates participate in the support community in order to build up a growing repository of Shaktipat experiences that may be absent from the formal literature. I am also happy to offer advice on practice and answer any questions there. The decision is up to the newly initiated.

### **Shaktipat Self-Initiation to open your mind (Shambhavia Mudra)**

Many years ago in the 1960s, when I first became interested in meditation and the esoteric elements of yoga, I remember looking through dozens of texts and noticing a strange recurring theme. Throughout the texts I saw paintings of yogis depicted as being in a deep state of Samadhi, with their eyes crossed and directed up towards the centre of their forehead. At that time, I did not have a computer and even less Internet.

It turns out that the yogis in those images weren't just pulling funny faces, they were applying a simple yet powerful consciousness expanding technique known as Shambhavia mudra or eyebrow gazing. Applying this simple technique of turning the eyes up towards the centre of the forehead allowed these explorers of consciousness to open their mind's eye and see the unity and the oneness of everything.

Shambhavia muddra can be looked at on two levels; they are the external, physical level, and the internal, mental level. In this post I'll describe the physical level, as understanding and learning how to apply it lays the foundation for practising on the mental level.

The Shambhavia muddra is used in many spiritualities, including:

- Kriya yoga
- Isha yoga
- Hinduism
- Kundalini Yoga, or
- Shaktipat Diksha

### **Benefits of Shambhavia Mudra**

- The main benefit of the Shambhavia mudra is to provide great insight and clarity to the practitioner.
- Practicing the Shambhavia mudra stimulates the third eye
- It improves interpersonal communication skills
- Creates oneness



- Helps with communication between the left and right hemispheres of the brain.
- Increase in theta and delta brainwaves (leading to relaxation).
- Helps us reach higher states of consciousness
- Helps us reach Samadhi
- The Gheranda Samhita declares that one who masters Shambhavia mudra becomes equal to Lord Siva, Vishnu and Brahma.
- Strengthens eye muscles (this is actually one of my personal favourite advantages of the Shambhavia mudra).
- Activates Ajna chakra
- Helps us awaken

### **The Physical level of Shambhavia**

In the same way that Yogis noticed the other bandhas and mudras occurring spontaneously throughout their body as their mind began to awaken, they also observed how, when they entered a deep state of meditation, their eyes would naturally roll up and in towards the centre of their forehead. It seems that this natural movement of the eyes, in response to the mind entering deeper states of awareness and expansion, has the effect of bringing the two hemispheres of the brain into harmony with each other, creating a unity and synergy between all parts of the brain.

With this understanding of Shambhavia mudra, it's interesting to see how an awakened mind is often symbolised by closed eyes turned up towards a single, opened eye in the centre of the forehead. Symbolically, this represents the neurological integrative affect Shambhavia has upon the brain, and the subsequent awareness of unity and oneness that arises in the mind.

### **The Shambhavia Mudra Instructions**

Direct your eyes toward the middle of the eyebrows and meditate upon your own self. It is Shambhavia Mudra, the most secret practice of all the Tantra scriptures.'

1. Sit comfortably with good posture and place your hands on your knees. Briefly shut your eyes then reopen them and focus your gaze on a fixed spot. Next, look up high but without moving your head.
2. Focus your gaze on the spot in the middle of your eyebrows and concentrate on this area. Meditate on it. Let go of thoughts, as you would

in regular meditation. You should be see your eyebrows as a V shape, with your gaze fixed in the middle of the V.

3. While maintaining this focus, chant OM. Meditate on the sound of OM reverberating around the spot you are gazing at.
4. Do not strain your eyes. They should be relaxed at all times.
5. Continue for five minutes.
6. Close your eyes but keep your gaze on that same spot in the middle of the eyebrows.
7. Chant OM slowly while meditating on the sound.
8. Begin to make each individual OM last longer. You should be breathing deep through your nose.
9. Continue for five minutes.

The effects of this practice, although happening mostly in the background, manifest in a specific way. Over time, as the eye position of Shambhavia integrates the brain's hemispheres and begins to stimulate and activate specific areas of the brain, the practitioner begins to see a light in the centre of his/her forehead. The longer the practice is used, the stronger the new neurological connections become. The effect of this neurological strengthening is a growing intensity in the brightness of the inner light in the head.

## **Integration**

When we integrate Shambhavia mudra into our bandha and meditative practices we are greatly enhancing their effects on the awakening body and mind. Eventually, when we practice our meditation in conjunction with Shambhavia, the mind becomes completely absorbed in the light in the head. When we reach this point in our practice, the mind expands and we see ourselves in everything and everything in us.

## **Infusing the Mind with Love, Peace and Bliss**

For the most part people tend to approach life either from a rational, intellectual level or an intuitive, emotional level. It's rare to find a fully integrated person capable of living life and seeing the world from both perspectives, simultaneously feeling, intuiting and rationalising what they see and do. This is because for most of us there's a clash between the heart and mind. Yet there doesn't have to be a clash, we don't have to choose the heart or the mind. As humans, we're capable of integrating the rational and the emotional centres of being, and when we do, an entirely new perspective begins to develop, and a new type of intelligence emerges. This is Yoga, a process of joining together

and integrating all aspects of our being, a process that happens on a psychological, physiological and energetic level.

Although there are many methods used to integrate our mental and emotional states of being, those ingenious yogis of the past, using their reverse engineering insights gleaned from lifetimes of meditative practice, developed a very simple technique. This technique, capable of building a bridge between heart and mind, is called Jalandhara Bandha.

## **Practice**

1. Sitting in a relaxed posture, begin by focusing on your breath.
2. As you inhale, tilt your head forward, allowing your chin to drop down onto your chest or as close to it as feels comfortable.
3. As you exhale, slowly lift your head and tilt it backwards.
4. Continue in this way for ten breaths. Then relax. Slowly increase the length of time spent doing this exercise and make sure not to move your head too fast as you can damage your neck if you do.

Energetically, Jalandhara Bandha is said to seal the upward flowing prana and reverse its flow in the body, sending it down into the heart. This is an important aspect of yogic theory. Using the language of energy, yogis say, when the upward flowing energy and the downward flowing energy reverse their direction, they fuse together. When these two energies fuse, a third energy is created, that energy is known as kundalini. As kundalini rises, the mind expands into Samadhi. When Jalandhara is integrated with the other bandhas, we create this reverse flow.

Neurologically, Jalandhara stimulates the nerves of the heart and throat, and lights up the frontal lobes and emotional centres in the brain, while on a more physical body level, moving the head in this way increases the pumping action of the other bandhas on the cerebrospinal fluid, further sharpening and clearing the mind while detoxing the brain.

## **Integrated practice**

As you breathe in, apply Mula Bandha, Uddiyana Bandha, and Jalandhara Bandha.

As you breathe out, release all three Bandhas. Continue in this way for ten breaths. Increase the number of breaths slowly. This practice has much deeper effects than are immediately obvious.

## **Personal experience**

My own experience of Jalandhara Bandha was a little uncomfortable, as all of these spontaneous things tend to be. I woke up one morning with a stiff neck. Initially I thought it was caused by a draft in the room or a bad sleeping position. So I got up and went to work. I sat down to begin my workday, and over the period of about half an hour I noticed my neck becoming increasingly tense. Eventually it got to the point where I couldn't even turn my head. So I went home sick and got into bed. And that's where I spent the next three days, lying there, in complete stillness. On the third day, I woke up and all the tension in my neck had completely disappeared. It was the morning of that third day, after a short breathing and meditative practice that I had my first kundalini awakening, the awakening. This points out, once more, that you do not need a guru realised or not to develop Shaktipat Diksha. Through persistent meditation you are developing your inner powers or faculties.

## **Awakening the Serpent Fire**

Kundalini (coiled serpent) is the spiritual power that, in most people, lays dormant at the base of the spine. When she awakens, she makes her way up through the spiritual centres, called chakras, until she reaches the highest spiritual centre, the sahasrara chakra, where she unites with her consort, Shiva. As Kundalini and Shiva unite, the Sadhak (spiritual aspirant) enters a deep meditative trance where he/she becomes one with the universe.

The path of kundalini, also called the path of fire, is filled with many dangers and for that reason is only suited for certain Sadhaks (spiritual aspirants). If Kundalini rises through the wrong channel, even though various siddhis (yogi powers) arise, many physical and mental illnesses manifest in the practitioner, sometimes ending in death.

What follows is my story of how Kundalini woke me up to the world.

## **The Awakening**

Some sixteen years ago, in late Winter, I had just finished my morning practices, which consisted of breathing and meditation. As I sat strait to allow the energy generated by my practices flow through me, a sudden panic set in as I realised my body was completely paralysed. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't even move my eyes; every part of me was frozen.

Soon after the paralysis set in, I began to feel something moving just beneath the surface of my skin. It felt like dozens of worms wriggling and moving upwards, starting in my lower legs and making their way towards my upper thighs and sacrum (tail bone). As they progressed up my legs, they grow in size and reduced in number, as if they were merging into one.

## **My dying breath**

Once the worms, which were more like two snakes at this stage, reached my upper legs, they merged into one large snake. This powerful snake entered my sacrum and began moving up my spinal column, one vertebrae at a time. As she moved through my spine, each vertebrae she moved through, completely disintegrated.

As the snake ascended, I became increasingly panicked. And by the time she reached the level of my heart, I thought I was going to die. At this point, I completely surrendered to the process; I accepted my impending (as it were) death.

Once I accepted my death, the process became much smoother and almost enjoyable, although still scarier than anything else I had ever experienced.

As she moved into my chest, she forced her way into my heart, which felt as if it exploded into a billion pieces. As this happened, I released a deep sigh, after which my breathing became completely suspended. I thought it was my dying breath, but strangely, I was still conscious, still existing in this thing, this body I call myself. From this stage on, my mind became completely serene. Even though I thought I was dying, I was absolutely at peace with the process.

## **The grand finale: my orgasmic brain**

As the serpent emerged from my heart, she continued moving up through my spine until she reached the point at the base of my skull. She paused there for a few moments as if preparing for her final ascent. Then as she penetrated my skull, my tongue physically rolled back and pushed up behind my soft palate, penetrating my nasal cavity, with the tip of my tongue touching a soft spot directly above my nasal septum. As this happened, it was like having a thousand orgasms all at once, in my brain. In this moment, everything around me disappeared as my awareness was turned completely inward.

Just as my awareness reached the point where it seemed as if nothing existed, I felt my head explode and as it did, my awareness spread outwards in every direction. I felt as if I was both everything and nothing, simultaneously existing and not existing.

The sense of being everything and nothing at the same time seemed to go on for an eternity.

## **Re-entry: My descent into a world of illusion**

After a period of time, I'm not sure how long, my awareness re-entered the physical body. It felt as if the universe was breathing me into physical existence.

Moments after entering my body, my lungs expanded as I took my first breath in this new state of expanded awareness.

For about three months after this experience, I felt as if I was floating around in a world of illusion. Everything I looked at had a glow emanating from it. Living things had auras of vibrant colour that expanded further than I could see. Each aura was connected to the things around it. Watching the world in this way was like living in a dream. I watched waves of energy dancing across the sky, witnessing scenes that I could never hope to describe in a physical sense.

Gradually, over the next six months, I settled back into a more normal state of perception, mostly because I stopped my practices, in fear of leaving my body and not returning

### **The after effects**

Although, so many years later in 2017, I still experience many after effects from this kundalini awakening, I am for the most part able to function as a “normal human being.” But in saying that, there are two after effects that are of deeper significance than the others. One is the ability to apply something called Kechari mudra. This is the name used to describe when the tongue is pushed up behind the soft palate, into the nasal cavity. Doing this has many powerful effects upon the body and mind, effects I’ll discuss at another time. The second after effect is called Shaktipat which we already know, the ability to initiate the awakening of another person’s kundalini.

### **Meditation is faster than the laying-on-hands of a guru**

Meditation’s greatest benefit is that it accelerates spiritual growth more than the divine touch (?) or laying on hands of a guru in Shaktipat. Do you want to be filled with love completely? Do you want to meditate in the deepest states right now? Do you want to be able to work with the most powerful energies in our universe? Your daily meditation as you do will help.

Simply meditation can awaken pure awareness in you. Meditating in pure awareness is Samadhi –the highest goal of meditation. Your awakening can happen instantly or in stages –according to your inner ability and spiritual level.

### **Eight scientific ways towards a happy living**

‘As you sow so shall as you reap’ is a famous biblical quote that reflects with the cause and effect. Whatever it may be – deterministic or free will, we have seen that those who took deliberate actions in life were left with the respective results. If you are a strong believer that you can have a better life with much of happiness and better fulfilment of desires (not spiritual contentment) in life then, this is for you.

According to cognitive psychology, most of our decisions in life are made unconsciously before we actually become aware of it. Even though most of our decisions are made unconsciously, we have the causal possibility to control the circumstances that lead to such decisions. Our future indeed depends on the past events and how we effectively utilize every opportunity to improve our life.

Subconscious mind determines our attitude, behaviour, and personality, and how our life is craved in depended on it. The subconscious mind has a basis in our past experiences, belief system, and natural conditions. It has a biologically wired counterpart – neural connections where it is feebly influenced by our genes. Alternatively, these neural pathways shape our subconscious mind.

Routine habits and cultivating new personality traits create new neural pathways. The scientific research proved that our brain requires less than four weeks for generating a new neural connection as a result of new character trait.

If you have bad character traits then, it's the result of such neural pathways. The characteristic of the biological system is that it motivates one to strengthen the existing pathways. That's why a sad or depressed person feels the urge to feed the mind with negative thoughts rather than the positive feelings even if he is rationally aware of it.

The studies showed that the bad people character traits are due to such distinctive neural pathways. They are wired to behave accordingly. Similarly, the drug addicts are more prone to drugs and develop a sense of urge to it due to the pathways formed by its consistent usage. Eventually, such mental disorder becomes difficult to change biologically.

If you need to change a bad personality trait then change these neural connections. If you need to develop new skills rewire your neurons. Genes have only less than fifty percent influence over these and there is much more room to change.

Our subconscious mind is a result of these unique neural connections where our intuition works with the available resources and what we feed to our subconscious mind

Listed here are the ways to develop better neural connection naturally so you can lead a much better life than before.

## **1. Being with Passionate People**

If you analyse the special character traits of the intelligent people you can notice that they try to connect with the passionate people and those who are more intelligent than them. This is how they grow in life.

There's the only considerable number of successful and passionate people in the world and majority of people are leading a life not up to their expectations. So, being with the folks only ends up with the folks.

We are social being where others can influence our life to a greater extent. If we are continuously engaging with pessimistic people probably we get discouraged in life. Similarly, if you are spending more time with a passionate guy you can feel the difference in life.

It might not be possible for everyone to get around with the most successful people. Never mind, there are many people with such character traits. Everyone is unique where some people get attracted to those who are having special character traits based on upon psychologically driven conditions.

However, there are few character traits that are common to all. In the article '7 Ways to Become More Interesting to Others,' I said that how the certain common character makes one socially attractive.

## **2. Getting Experience and Knowledge**

Great knowledge is one of the significant possessions of the people who are leading a better life. Not only acquiring knowledge through the books is counted but also the relevant experiences gained in the life that adds up one's ability to lead a happier life is also considered.

It is a philosophical hypothesis that great knowledge can improve your level of happiness. So as with one's increasing age, where people gain more knowledge as for how to become happy despite their circumstances. Where happiness increases with age is a proven scientific fact.

If a spiritual person is very contented in life then, it's due to his wisdom.

## **3. Learn To Cultivate Happiness**

Most of the activities of life reach its fullest level when a person is happy. Whether it's a perpetual happiness or temporary, it has similar biological attributes in the brain.

If you are not happy with the life, look for the unmet needs of life as I said in the book 'Crack the Hidden Laws of Life'. These are the hidden subconscious needs of life that have to be fulfilled. This is the only way to have the long term happiness in life.

Money is not a primal factor for happiness but for worldly people it supports the mind in various factors.

A Happy mind is the best way to get enthusiasm in activities and to feel energetic where the happy person gets easily motivated in life.



## **4. Developing a Healthy Belief System**

If a person is hindering in his life, certainly it will be the root cause is his belief system and ignorance. The belief system is a deeply coded attribute of the subconscious mind that influence the efficacy of our mental process. It is also developed as result of past and present life experiences. Becoming successful in life, developing self-confidence and acquiring new skills are checked by this belief system.

We are unconsciously restricted by this mental attribute and require a strong factual knowledge or experiences to alter such beliefs. This unconscious mind has a powerful influence over our all mental processes. It is the ultimate controller of over behaviours, our weakness, and strengths. Moreover, all psychological states of mind are determined it.

## **5. By Motivating Your Mind**

It is common that we all get exposed to tremendous negativity in life. This negativity can erode our productive mind.

So, one can develop certain neural pathways according to their tasks as like the people who led a better life.

## **6. Lower Your Mental Waves**

A higher mental wave is the seat of the unsteady mind. Agitation, restlessness, stupidity, etc. are the consequence of higher frequency mind. Unproductive decisions are made in such state of mind.

Mind relaxing music and meditation practices help you to lower the mental frequency.

## **7. Allow Your Intuition and Higher Senses To Work**

When the mind is calmed down our intuition and higher senses works perfectly. It is our best guide to lead a better life. The role of higher senses in one's life is wrapped in philosophy. Napoleon Hill said that if a person has to lead a better life, successful in his deeds, and possessed a higher creative ability then these qualities was endowed with the higher sense of a person.

## **8. Lastly, get a Good Deep Sleep**

Finally, getting a deep sleep makes you active with a healthy body and healthy mind. A deep sleep is inevitable for the higher senses to work better where it helps to increase your productivity. The studies showed that the people who are having a sound sleep are less prone to negative emotions and has a better control over their activities.

## Signs of Kundalini Awakening

A variety of experiences result on awakening of Kundalini. These experiences depend upon a multitude of factors, of which the principal contributors are the nature and character of Sadhak, the strength of Kundalini power and the physical attributes of Sadhak.

The indications are so numerous and yet newer experiences are being reported. As no attempt was made earlier to put all such experiences in one place, additions to this list of indications is inevitable. Some of the indications of awakening of Kundalini are listed below.

1. The limbs, hand and feet become numb, as if they go to sleep. On moving them a tingling sensation occurs.
2. Entire body gets warm.
3. During meditation the mouth gets filled with water.
4. A feeling of body growing big and bigger or the feeling as if the body is shrinking from small to smaller size.
5. A feeling of astral body coming out of the physical body and moving in astral world.
6. The feeling of heaviness of eyes or of eye lids becoming heavy.
7. Heaviness of head.
8. Anger rising during meditation or meditator suddenly becoming angry.
9. Body of Sadhak starts trembling or moves uncontrollably in oscillating Manner.
10. During meditation the Sadhak starts singing, dancing, shouting, shrieking and prancing uncontrollably.
11. Certain yogic practices such as Aasana, Bhastrika and Pranayama happen to Sadhak involuntarily.
12. Feeling, as if of electric shocks in the body.
13. Feeling as if the body is rotating or going round and round in circles or as if the world around is also spinning.
14. Uncontrolled laughter or crying during meditation.
15. Hearing of strange sounds during meditation.
16. Despite being deep in meditation, jumping on haunches like a frog.

17. Going round and round in circles or to start crawling during meditation.

18. Roaring like a lion or making sounds of other beasts or animals during meditation.

19. Rotating the neck in full circles.

20. The eyes turn automatically towards Ajna Chakra and the white portion of eyeball alone being seen outside.

21. Chanting or invocation of mantras, hymns during meditation.

22. Experiencing drowsiness or feeling of intoxication.

23. Having visions relating to own suppressed desires, wishes etc.

24. Having visions of Red, Yellow, Blue or White coloured clouds.

These colours relate to colours of various Chakras (wheels) and get reflected or are seen at the Ajna Chakra. However, if the etheric body of the seeker is cleansed, he will have visions of clear light (colourless) only. This signifies purity of etheric having been achieved.

25. A feeling of peace and calm prevails. Seeker experiences bliss, a state difficult to describe in words.

26. Arising of certain complex unresolved problems during meditation and getting their solutions too during meditation itself. (Problem and Solution)

27. A desire to visit places of sacred religious importance, arising during meditation and visiting those places in astral body during meditation itself. (Desire and Fulfilment)

28. Going into trance with open eyes, getting deep into meditation with eyes remaining wide open for 15 to 20 minutes.

29. An experience of walking through the skies and visiting different parts of universe during meditation.

30. Feeling of giddiness during meditation and experiencing falls while walking, also during meditation.

31. During meditation the feet of the seeker turn skywards. This position lasts for a short while only and returns to normal position soon.

32. A feeling of severe headache during meditation. It is advised NOT to take medications for such a headache. It will go away by itself.

33. The meditator sees dreadful scenes during meditation. He should not get scared, if it so happens.

34. Some meditators see their own forms during meditation. This is called

“PRTIKA DARSHAN” in some of the scriptures. It is a good omen.

35. Sadhak has visions of Lord Shiva wearing a garland of human skulls, of Mahakali similarly or Mother Shakti – Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva.

36. Sadhak sees skeletons during meditation.

37. A scene of death of a near and dear one during meditation. (some feel that this may ward-off the imminent danger to them.)

38. Some seekers have visions of the dead being cremated. These seekers become instruments for the salvation of souls of such of the dead.

39. Sadhak sees Lord Vishnu, the Preserver, Lying on the Sesh – Shaiyya (the Seven hooded serpent god, who forms the base of the Universe) or Shiva and Parvati; or vision of Lord Rama; or Lord Krishna engaged in RaasLeela, a dance sequence with gopis; or dreadful ascetic form of Lord Shiva. The Sadhak should not get frightened by such visions. On the other hand these visions ennoble the Sadhak by increasing his inner strengths.

40. Some Sadhaks experience movement of gas in their intestines, the sound of which they can clearly hear. In such cases, the Sadhak should lie flat on back and the wind movement will go away.

41. Some seekers experience fluttering sensation on the Brow Chakra (Ajna Chakra) or sensation of breeze on the point. In such cases it is advised to rub ghee (clarified butter) or Sandal wood paste on the forehead.

42. Fluttering sensation in eyes, ears, nose and cheeks occurs. This occurs when the twin petals (Ham & Ksham) of Ajna Chakra rotate.

43. Visions of past events come before the eyes and sometimes the events of future cast their images.

44. Guru appears in front of the Sadhak in meditation and untangles various problems and answers the questions.

45. Sometimes Divine sound or voice is heard during meditation.

46. An experience of total bliss occurs, thus taking the Sadhak to his goal. The mind is restless and is disturbed by lust and other desires. The desires

in subconscious erupt and get destroyed; a burning sensation occurs at the Solar plexus. This burning sensation can be soothed by praying to Divine Mother, or chanting Hanuman Chalisa or other hymns. The physical heat should be countered by taking milk with two to three spoons of clarified butter (ghee) immediately after the meditation is over. The Guru comes in his astral form and takes care of the Sadhak and his fears without his knowledge.

47. Divine chants and messages descend from the Heavens.

48. Sound of Nupur (bells worn on anklets), tabor, twin drum (Damaru), flute, conch shell, thunder of clouds and temple bells is heard by Sadhaks.

49. On awakening of Kundalini the Sadhak experiences distinct fragrances of variety of flowers.

50. Sadhak experiences cold breeze blowing through. He also experiences discomfort as if all the joints of waist and below are paining.

51. A feeling as if one has been tied by a rope, all-round.

52. In case of some Sadhaks a feeling of intense heat and burning sensation in the stomach occurs when the Kundalini rises upto the Manipur Chakra (the Navel Wheel or Solar plexus).

53. The Sadhak feels cheerful and disease free; an unprecedented feeling of relief comes over. This is possible with SHAKTIPAT. Shaktipat removes diseases and ailments.

54. Body is filled with purity, serenity and divinity. A feeling of seeing the self from outside by own twin – SAKSHIBHAV.

55. The Sadhak becomes fully aware of his previous incarnation. He becomes aware of his present circumstances, problems and reasons thereof. He succeeds in analysing his previous deeds and the fruits of such actions.

56. After Shaktipat, rapid progress is experienced by the Sadhak. He leads a life of bliss and ecstasy, totally free of tensions. He is joyous and relaxed in life.

57. When he sees a person, he tries to relate to himself and that persons previous birth (s); who was he?, etc. He instinctively goes into the past lives and establish mutual identities and relationships.

58. Whatever he wishes, fructifies. There is a magic in his speech which attracts the listeners. People are easily impressed by his logic and gravity of speech.

59. Whosoever, a man or a woman comes in front of him, his present, past and future are all depicted before him like a cinema reel. He is able to foretell and anticipate their future.

60. He develops a magnetic personality. People are naturally charmed by the radiance that flows from his face and body. He charms and attracts their gaze.

61. Shaktipat protects a man like an armour shield. In whatever direction he marches, success greets him with extended arms. He becomes a special person.

62. He goes into meditation, involuntarily, all of a sudden. He then goes into deep bliss. He has to perforce make a determined effort, a SANKALPA, not to get into meditation unknowingly.

63. On closing his eyes, he sees circles of light in front of the eyes.

64. He sees groups of clouds moving hither and thither before his eyes.

65. Some part of the body becomes hard & stiff.

66. The diseased part of the body starts paining.

67. The diseased part of the body gets warm.

68. The diseased part becomes heavy.

69. The part of the body that is diseased, starts fluttering and vibrating.

70. A blinding light, the brilliance of thousands of Suns is seen in front of the eyes.

71. Sometimes the bright white light vision is followed by pitch darkness.

72. The eye-lids start fluttering by themselves. The individual loses control over this function.

73. Sometimes the eyes start pulling inside. This may lead to automatic occurrence of SHAMBHAVI and KHECHARI MUDRAS.

74. In a manner similar to that occurs in cattle, the whole body starts flapping and fluttering. The cheeks, back, chest, stomach, thighs and calves vibrate or tremble.

75. The Sadhak in his meditation feels as if he has put a cap over his head.

76. A feeling of something creeping or climbing, up or down, left or right, to the front or to the rear. As the SHAKTI rises upwards that part of the body becomes warm or cold.

77. There occurs excessive tension at the AJNA CHAKRA (The Brow Chakra) and the body feels painful and listless.
78. Despite the eyelids being closed, the pupils move in a circular motion.
79. Intense heat is experienced in point between the eye brows, the AJNA CHAKRA. Many a times the portion becomes black as if it has been adorned with a black BINDI (a circle, round in shape). The skin may even burn and peel off.
80. A feeling as if someone is cutting or digging at the AJNA CHAKRA with sharp tool.
81. At times it feels as if some insect has entered at the AJNA CHAKRA or in the head and is moving all over the head.
82. A circle of light approaches the AJNA CHAKRA either from the left or the right. However, it does not advance beyond the midpoint between the brows and retracts thereafter.
83. During meditation the head moves left to right, right to left and up and down.
84. It feels that the entire head is covered with nets.
85. During meditation tears flow from the eyes.
86. One yawns while meditating.
87. If one goes to sleep concentrating on the Brow Chakra then he dreams that he is dreaming. He knows that he is dreaming and remembers his dreams. Sometimes the dreams are colourful and sometimes the dreams forecast the events of the future.
88. A solution to any complex unresolved problem or a mental tension appears during the dreams.
89. Inspiration to write poems and stories comes during meditation.
90. Focussed on Ajna Chakra, the future events reveal themselves on it.



## **Various helpful meditation techniques for developing Kundalini without guru**

### **Kundalini Kriya Meditation**

The meditation consists of three meditation methods you switch between. When one reaches a plateau, you switch to the other method, when that reaches a plateau, you switch back to one of the other two methods, and so forth. Back and forth between the three main techniques, but all the time with one objective: to raise Shakti more and more and merge with it. When the Self reveals itself, let go of the practice and merge. The purpose of the meditation method is not to train oneself to do it perfectly, but to generate a state within where the Self may reveal itself.

#### **1. Body Breathing**

As you observe the breathing, feel the entire body. it is as if the sense of touch all over the skin senses the skin itself. Now feel that on the in-breath you expand out through the skin. On the out breath simply let go. Another way of saying it is that on the in-breath you feel the Shakti growing in intensity and size. On the out-breath you let go of any control and duality and merge with Shakti in and around the body. As this progresses, you will feel the body's limits dissolve and that the feeling of Shakti becomes more tangible than the feeling of the body. Do this as long as Shakti gets stronger and you merge more and more.

#### **2. Spine Breathing**

On the in-breath feel you are moving energy up the entire spine at once, from the perineum to the top of the head. You can remember the word "Shakti" as you



do this. On the out breath feel you are radiating energy, or love-bliss, in all directions from the brain and skull. You can remember the word "om" as you breathe out. But these words are really not important, the important thing is to feel Shakti grow and to merge with Shakti. With a little practice the two phases will merge so that you on both the in-breath and out-breath sense the flow up the spine and the radiation from the brain. Do this as long as Shakti gets stronger and you merge more and more.

### **3. Inflow-Outflow (Shakti-void)**

Ignore the breath. Just sense love, bliss, Shakti, presence, Being, flow into you and radiate from you at the same time. This double direction can be a little tricky, but once you get it going, you will enter void and feel the double flow happening by itself.

### **Merging in Love-Peace-Bliss, Surrendering to the Self**

When you experience being filled with Shakti or love bliss, or Pure Being grabs you, then let go of your methods and merge with it. This is the goal of all practices and methods, so no matter what practice you are doing, if you are on the verge of transcending I-ness and merging, then let go of the method/practice and merge in love bliss/Pure Being/Shakti.

### **Kundalini Pranayama**

It is not possible to praise this wonderful pranayama enough. Begin doing it now!

This is in the class of pranayama, but the focus of the practice is not control of prana, but awakening and arousal of kundalini and generation of Shakti-bliss on which one can surf into the Self and merge awareness and Shakti into Pure Being.

Sit in a comfortable position and do the preparations for meditation as described above.

There is a special breathing cycle to this, that it is important one keeps. It has three steps: breathing in, holding the breath and breathing out. It is important that each of the three phases are of equal duration. It is also important one keeps the rhythm going steadily, so one should find a duration that suits one well.

One could count to three repeatedly in the same rhythm (or whatever number is appropriate). It is important not to get tense, so one should find a comfortable number and rhythm one can keep steadily for 50 minutes without getting out of breath or feeling one is enforcing control over the breath. Enforcing control will

not do any good at all, in fact it will block the intended result. It should be a nice, calm, peaceful cycle.

### **Kundalini pranayama version one**

1. On the in-breath imagine and feel Shakti moving from the perineum and up the entire spine to the top of the head. Don't imagine it as a point going up, but more like a flow in the entire channel. Don't be alarmed if you don't feel this channel, most don't, just go on visualizing and imagining.
2. Hold your breath in a comfortable and relaxed manner. Meanwhile imagine/feel the energy in the brain radiate in all directions. When you succeed with this, you will know that even if you did not feel the spine, energy has rushed up the spine all the same.
3. On the out-breath simply let go of any effort that may have been involved and merge with the Shakti present in and around the body. Alternatively: On the out-breath continue radiating Shakti in all directions from the brain and skull.

Do this for as long as you like. Soon you will experience tremendous bliss.

### **Kundalini pranayama version two**

This version has a slightly different set of bhavas (feeling-senses).

Breathe in to the count of three.

Hold your breath to the count of three.

Breathe out to the count of three.

You can count to anything you like as long as the periods are of equal duration and you find a rhythm you can hold uninterrupted for one hour. It is important you keep on counting so you keep the mind occupied.

While you do this there is a kind of bhava (feeling sense) that is very important.

Breathing in: Sense/feel/visualize Shakti/prana flowing into the entire body.

Holding your breath: Sense/feel/visualize Shakti/prana radiating from the entire body.

Breathing out: Sense/feel/visualize that your brain is a mass of bright light.

When Samadhi comes, let go of the practice and enjoy. When samadhi ends, immediately take up the practice again.

Be aware that this practice is for arousing kundalini. You may experience this as something moving in your perineum or spine, but do not be alarmed. If you find it releases more energy than you are comfortable with, then also do not be alarmed, for it will soon calm down and integrate with the system. Just don't fight it.

## **Bindu Kriya**

This meditation has several stages to be performed in the following order...

A. Feel the perineum (area between genitals and anus) and sense that on the in-breath energy moves up a few inches and on the out-breath moves down again. Do this for about ten breaths.

B. Sense a ball of energy an inch or so above the perineum. On the in-breath expand it and on the out-breath simply let go. Do this for about ten breaths.

C. Sense energy radiating in all directions from the root centre just above the perineum. Try to get a sense of continuous flow. Do this for as long as you go deeper and deeper, - or if possible merge in bliss. When you reach a plateau, go to D.

D. Now centre your attention on the top of the skull. On the in-breath and also on the out-breath sense you are allowing the energy to rush up your spine to the crown. Do this for about ten breaths.

E. On the in-breath sense energy rising about an inch out through the top of your skull. On the out-breath sense it going down again about an inch into the head. Do this for about ten breaths.

F. Sense a ball of energy at the skull, about two inches in diameter. On the in-breath expand it and on the out-breath simply let go. Do this for about ten breaths.

G. Sense energy radiating in all directions from the crown. Try to get a sense of continuous flow. Do this for as long as you get deeper and deeper, - or if possible merge in bliss.

H. Sense energy radiating from both the root chakra and the crown chakra. After a while the two will merge. When you reach a plateau, go to A and repeat the steps.

## Chakra Kriya meditation

This is a little complex and too detailed to describe here. It does the chakra-breathing describe below in each chakra in turn; then some spinal breathing; then grounding in root chakra and finally full body breathing.

The guided version takes you from the bottom to the top, but you could extend the duration by going from the top to the bottom after you have gone from the bottom to the top. That will take about 50 minutes.

## Chakra Pranayama

This can be done in any chakra (energy-centre), but is usually done in the root chakra (the perineum), the heart chakra (middle of the chest ) or in the Ajna chakra (between the eyebrows). Or if you want to do a nice and very powerful systematic method, you can go through all the chakras in order beginning at the bottom and moving up one at a time (this is Chakra Kriya Meditation). I have done this for a period of some years, twice daily for about an hour or so in each sitting, and had wonderful results from it. This practice is basically utilizing the same principle as described above. It has three steps to be performed in each chakra.

A. Pulsating. On the in-breath sense energy going forward from the spine and to the front of the body and on the out-breath moving back into the spine. Do this for about ten breaths. (If working with the root chakra or crown chakra, sense the energy moving up on the in-breath and down on the out-breath)

B. Expanding. On the in-breath sense it expanding and on the out-breath sense it contracting. Do this for about ten breaths.

C. Radiating. On both the in- and out-breath, sense it radiating from the chakra. Do this for about ten breaths.

D. Receiving (void). On both the in- and out-breath sense energy flowing into the chakra and radiating from the chakra at the same time. Or just flowing in. Do this for about ten breaths.

E. If you want to do a systematic practice for awakening the entire chakra system, then this is how to shift from one chakra to the next: On the in-breath feel energy rising up the spine from the chakra you are leaving and reaching the next chakra; on the out-breath feel the new chakra expanding. Do this for about ten breaths, then proceed as described above.

**Note:** As you do this practice, you may feel pressure in the body in the chakra area. Also hidden emotions may arise. Please allow whatever comes up to arise,

be what it is and leave. Remember the goal is not catharsis, but to generate a pulse of Shakti (spiritual energy), on which you can surf into bliss and Self.



## **Hindu Scriptures**

### **Sanskrit Literature**

Sanskrit literature can be classified under six orthodox heads and four secular heads. The six orthodox sections form the authoritative scriptures of the Hindus. The four secular sections embody the later developments in classical Sanskrit literature.

The six scriptures are: (i) Srutis, (ii) Smritis, (iii) Itihasas, (iv) Puranas, (v) Agamas and (vi) Darsanas.

The four secular writings are: (i) Subhashitas, (ii) Kavyas, (iii) Natakas and (iv) Alankaras.

### **The Hindu Sacred Scriptures**

#### **The Srutis**

The Srutis are called the Vedas, or the Amnaya. The Hindus have received their religion through revelation, the Vedas. These are direct intuitional revelations and are held to be Apaurusheya or entirely superhuman, without any author in particular. The Veda is the glorious pride of the Hindus, nay, of the whole world!

The term Veda comes from the root Vid, to know. The word Veda means knowledge. When it is applied to scripture, it signifies a book of knowledge. The Vedas are the foundational scriptures of the Hindus. The Veda is the source of the other five sets of scriptures, why, even of the secular and the materialistic.

The Veda is the storehouse of Indian wisdom and is a memorable glory which man can never forget till eternity.

### **Revealed Truths without Beginning or End**

The Vedas are the eternal truths revealed by God to the great ancient Rishis of India. The word Rishi means a seer from dris, to see. He is the Mantra-Drashta, a seer of Mantra or thought. The thought was not his own. The Rishis saw the truths or heard them. Therefore, the Vedas are what are heard (Sruti). The Rishi did not write. He did not create it out of his mind. He was the seer of thought which existed already. He was only the spiritual discoverer of the thought. He is not the inventor of the Veda.

The Vedas represent the spiritual experiences of the Rishis of yore. The Rishi is only a medium or an agent to transmit to people the intuitional experiences which he received. The truths of the Vedas are revelations. All the other religions of the world claim their authority as being delivered by special messengers of God to certain persons, but the Vedas do not owe their authority to anyone. They are themselves the authority as they are eternal, as they are the Knowledge of the Lord.

Lord Brahma, the Creator, imparted the divine knowledge to the Rishis or seers. The Rishis disseminated the knowledge. The Vedic Rishis were great realised persons who had direct intuitive perception of Brahman or the Truth. They were inspired writers. They built a simple, grand and perfect system of religion and philosophy from which the founders and teachers of all other religions have drawn their inspiration.

The Vedas are the oldest books in the library of man. The truths contained in all religions are derived from the Vedas and are ultimately traceable to the Vedas. The Vedas are the fountain-head of religion. The Vedas are the ultimate source to which all religious knowledge can be traced. Religion is of divine origin. It was revealed by God to man in the earliest times. It is embodied in the Vedas.

The Vedas are eternal. They are without beginning and end. An ignorant man may say how a book can be without beginning or end. By the Vedas, no books are meant. Vedas came out of the breath of the Lord. They are the words of God. The Vedas are not the utterances of persons. They are not the composition of any human mind. They were never written, never created. They are eternal and impersonal. The date of the Vedas has never been fixed. It can never be fixed. Vedas are eternal spiritual truths. Vedas are an embodiment of divine knowledge. The books may be destroyed, but the knowledge cannot be destroyed. Knowledge is eternal. In that sense, the Vedas are eternal.

## **The Four Vedas and their Sub Divisions**

The Veda is divided into four great books: the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda and the Atharva-Veda. The Yajur-Veda is again divided into two parts, the Sukla and the Krishna. The Krishna or the Taittiriya is the older book and the Sukla or the Vajasaneya is a later revelation to sage Yajnavalkya from the resplendent Sun-God.

The Rig-Veda is divided into twenty-one sections, the Yajur-Veda into one hundred and nine sections, the Sama-Veda into one thousand sections and the Atharva-Veda into fifty sections. In all, the whole Veda is thus divided into one thousand one hundred and eighty recensions.

Each Veda consists of four parts: the Mantra-Samhitas or hymns, the Brahmanas or explanations of Mantras or rituals, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads. The division of the Vedas into four parts is to suit the four stages in a man's life.

The Mantra-Samhitas are hymns in praise of the Vedic God for attaining material prosperity here and happiness hereafter. They are metrical poems comprising prayers, hymns and incantations addressed to various deities, both subjective and objective. The Mantra portion of the Vedas is useful for the Brahmacharins.

The Brahmana portions guide people to perform sacrificial rites. They are prose explanations of the method of using the Mantras in the Yajna or the sacrifice. The Brahmana portion is suitable for the householders.

The Aranyakas are the forest books, the mystical sylvan texts which give philosophical interpretations of the rituals. The Aranyakas are intended for the Vanaprasthas or hermits who prepare themselves for taking Sannyasa.

The Upanishads are the most important portion of the Vedas. The Upanishads contain the essence or the knowledge portion of the Vedas. The philosophy of the Upanishads is sublime, profound, lofty and soul-stirring. The Upanishads speak of the identity of the individual soul and the Supreme Soul. They reveal the most subtle and deep spiritual truths. The Upanishads are useful for the Sannyasins.

The subject matter of the whole Veda is divided into Karma-Kanda, Upasana-Kanda and Jnana-Kanda. The Karma-Kanda or Ritualistic Section deals with various sacrifices and rituals. The Upasana-Kanda or Worship-Section deals with various kinds of worship or meditation. The Jnana-Kanda or Knowledge-Section deals with the highest knowledge of Nirguna Brahman. The Mantras and the Brahmanas constitute Karma-Kanda; the Aranyakas Upasana-Kanda; and the Upanishads Jnana-Kanda.

## **The Mantra-Samhitas**

The Rig-Veda Samhita is the grandest book of the Hindus, the oldest and the best. It is the Great Indian Bible, which no Hindu would forget to adore from the core of his heart. Its style, the language and the tone are most beautiful and mysterious. Its immortal Mantras embody the greatest truths of existence, and it is perhaps the greatest treasure in all the scriptural literature of the world. Its priest is called the Hotri.

The Yajur-Veda Samhita is mostly in prose and is meant to be used by the Adhvaryu, the Yajur-Vedic priest, for superfluous explanations of the rites in sacrifices, supplementing the Rig-Vedic Mantras.

The Sama-Veda Samhita is mostly borrowed from the Rig-Vedic Samhita and is meant to be sung by the Udgatri, the Sama-Vedic priest, in sacrifices.

The Atharva-Veda Samhita is meant to be used by the Brahma, the Atharva-Vedic priest, to correct the mispronunciations and wrong performances that may accidentally be committed by the other three priests of the sacrifice.

## **The Brahmanas and the Aranyakas**

There are two Brahmanas to the Rig-Veda—the Aitareya and the Sankhayana. “The Rig-Veda,” says Max Muller, “is the most ancient book of the world. The sacred hymns of the Brahmanas stand unparalleled in the literature of the whole world; and their preservation might well be called miraculous.”

The Satapatha Brahmana belongs to the Sukla Yajur-Veda. The Krishna-Yajur-Veda has the Taittiriya and the Maitrayana Brahmanas. The Tandya or Panchavimsa, the Shadvimsa, the Chhandogya, the Adbhuta, the Arsheya and the Upanishad Brahmanas belong to the Sama-Veda. The Brahmana of the Atharva-Veda is called the Gopatha. Each of the Brahmanas has got an Aranyaka.

## **The Upanishads**

The Upanishads are the concluding portions of the Vedas or the end of the Vedas. The teaching based on them is called Vedanta. The Upanishads are the gist and the goal of the Vedas. They form the very foundation of Hinduism.

There are as many Upanishads to each Veda as there are Sakhas, branches or recensions, i.e., 21, 109, 1000 and 50 respectively to the four Vedas, the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, the Sama-Veda and the Atharva-Veda.

The different philosophers of India belonging to different schools, such as Monism, Qualified Monism, Dualism, Pure Monism, Difference-cum-non-difference, etc., have acknowledged the supreme authority of the Upanishads.



They have given their own interpretations, but they have obeyed the authority. They have built their philosophy on the foundation of the Upanishads.

Even the Western scholars have paid their tribute to the seers of the Upanishads. At a time when the Westerners were clad in barks and were sunk in deep ignorance, the Upanishadic seers were enjoying the eternal bliss of the Absolute, and had the highest culture and civilisation.

The most important Upanishads are Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Aitareya, Taittiriya, Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka, Kaushitaki and Svetasvatara and Maitrayani. These are supremely authoritative.

May the fundamental truths of the Vedas be revealed unto you all, like the Amalaka fruit in the palm of your hand. May Gayatri, the blessed Mother of the Vedas, impart to you the milk of Knowledge, the ancient wisdom of the Upanishads.

### **The Upa-Vedas**

There are four Upa-Vedas or subsidiary Vedas, viz., the Ayurveda, the Dhanurveda, the Gandharva Veda and the Arthashastra, forming auxiliaries to the four Vedas, which mean, respectively, the science of health, the science of war, the science of music and the science of polity.

### **The Vedangas**

There are six Angas or explanatory limbs, to the Vedas: the Siksha and Vyakarana of Panini, the Chhandas of Pingalacharya, the Nirukta of Yaska, the Jyotisha of Garga, and the Kalpas (Srauta, Grihya, Dharma and Sulba) belonging to the authorship of various Rishis.

Siksha is a knowledge of phonetics. Siksha deals with pronunciation and accent. The text of the Vedas is arranged in various forms or Pathas. The Pada-patha gives each word its separate form. The Krama-patha connects the word in pairs.

Vyakarana is Sanskrit grammar. Panini's books are most famous. Without knowledge of Vyakarana, you cannot understand the Vedas.

Chhandas is metre dealing with prosody.

Nirukta is philology or etymology.

Jyotisha is astronomy and astrology. It deals with the movements of the heavenly bodies, planets, etc., and their influence in human affairs.

Kalpa is the method of ritual. The Srauta Sutras which explain the ritual of sacrifices belong to Kalpa. The sulba Sutras, which treat of the measurements which are necessary for laying out the sacrificial areas, also belong to Kalpa.

The Grihya Sutras which concern domestic life, and the Dharma Sutras which deal with ethics, customs and laws, also belong to Kalpa.

The Pratishakhyas, Padapathas, Kramapathas, Upalekhas, Anukramanis, Daivatsamhitas, Parishishtas, Prayogas, Paddhatis, Karikas, Khilas and Vyuhās are further elaborations in the rituals of the Kalpa Sutras.

Among the Kalpa Sutras, the Asvalayana, Sankhyana and the Sambhavya belong to the Rig-Veda. The Mashaka, Latyayana, Drahyayana, Gobhila and Khadira belong to the Sama-Veda. The Katyayana and Paraskara belong to the Sukla Yajur-Veda. The Apastamba, Hiranyakesi, Bodhayana, Bharadvaja, Manava, Vaikhanasa and the Kathaka belong to the Krishna Yajur-Veda. The Vaitana and the Kaushika belong to the Atharva-Veda.

## **The Smritis**

Next in importance to the Sruti are the Smritis or secondary scriptures. These are the ancient sacred law-codes of the Hindus dealing with the Sanatana-Varnasrama-Dharma. They supplement and explain the ritualistic injunctions called Vidhis in the Vedas. The Smriti Sastra is founded on the Sruti. The Smritis are based on the teachings of the Vedas. The Smriti stands next in authority to the Sruti. It explains and develops Dharma. It lays down the laws which regulate Hindu national, social, family and individual obligations.

The works which are expressly called Smritis are the law books, Dharma Sastras. Smriti, in a broader sense, covers all Hindu Sastras save the Vedas.

The laws for regulating Hindu society from time to time are codified in the Smritis. The Smritis have laid down definite rules and laws to guide the individuals and communities in their daily conduct and to regulate their manners and customs. The Smritis have given detailed instructions, according to the conditions of the time, to all classes of men regarding their duties in life.

The Hindu learns how he has to spend his whole life from these Smritis. The duties of Varnasrama and all ceremonies are clearly given in these books. The Smritis prescribe certain acts and prohibit some others for a Hindu, according to his birth and stage of life. The object of the Smritis is to purify the heart of man and take him gradually to the supreme abode of immortality and make him perfect and free.

These Smritis have varied from time to time. The injunctions and prohibitions of the Smritis are related to the particular social surroundings. As these surroundings and essential conditions of the Hindu society changed from time to time, new Smritis had to be compiled by the sages of different ages and different parts of India.

## **The Celebrated Hindu Law-Givers**

From time to time, a great law-giver would take his birth. He would codify the existing laws and remove those which had become obsolete. He would make some alterations, adaptations, readjustments, additions and subtractions, to suit the needs of the time and see that the way of living of the people would be in accordance with the teachings of the Veda. Of such law-givers, Manu, Yajnavalkya and Parasara are the most celebrated persons. Hindu society is founded on, and governed by, the laws made by these three great sages. The Smritis are named after them. We have Manu Smriti or Manava Dharma-Sastra (the Laws of Manu or the Institutes of Manu), Yajnavalkya Smriti and Parasara Smriti. Manu is the greatest law-giver of the race. He is the oldest law-giver as well. The Yajnavalkya Smriti follows the same general lines as the Manu Smriti and is next in importance to it. Manu Smriti and Yajnavalkya Smriti are universally accepted at the present time as authoritative works all over India. Yajnavalkya Smriti is chiefly consulted in all matters of Hindu Law. Even the Government of India are applying some of these laws.

There are eighteen main Smritis or Dharma Sastras. The most important are those of Manu, Yajnavalkya and Parasara. The other fifteen are those of Vishnu, Daksha, Samvarta, Vyasa, Harita, Satatapa, Vasishtha, Yama, Apastamba, Gautama, Devala, Sankha-Likhita, Usana, Atri and Saunaka.

The laws of Manu are intended for the Satya Yuga, those of Yajnavalkya are for the Treta Yuga; those of Sankha and Likhita are for the Dvapara Yuga; and those of Parasara are for the Kali Yuga.

The laws and rules which are based entirely upon our social positions, time and clime, must change with the changes in society and changing conditions of time and clime. Then only the progress of the Hindu society can be ensured.

## **Need for a New Law-Code**

It is not possible to follow some of the laws of Manu at the present time. We can follow their spirit and not the letter. Society is advancing. When it advances, it outgrows certain laws which were valid and helpful at a particular stage of its growth. Many new things which were not thought out by the old law-givers have come into existence now. It is no use insisting people to follow now those old laws which have become obsolete.

Our present society has considerably changed. A new Smriti to suit the requirements of this age is very necessary. Another sage will place before the Hindus of our days a new suitable code of laws. Time is ripe for a new Smriti. Cordial greetings to this age.

## **The Inner Voice of Dharma**

He who is endowed with a pure heart through protracted Tapas, Japa, Kirtana, meditation and service of Guru and who has a very clear conscience, can be guided by the inner voice in matters of Dharma or duty or moral action. The inner voice that proceeds from a clean heart filled with Sattva is, indeed, the voice of God or Soul or Antaryamin or Inner Ruler. This voice is more than Smriti. It is Smriti of Smritis. Purify your heart and train yourself to hear this inner voice. Keep your ear in tune with the 'voice'.

## **The Sruti and the Smriti**

The Sruti and the Smriti are the two authoritative sources of Hinduism. Sruti literally means what is heard, and Smriti means what is remembered. Sruti is revelation and Smriti is tradition. Upanishad is a Sruti. Bhagavad-Gita is a Smriti.

Sruti is direct experience. Great Rishis heard the eternal truths of religion and left a record of them for the benefit of posterity. These records constitute the Vedas. Hence, Sruti is primary authority. Smriti is a recollection of that experience. Hence, it is secondary authority. The Smritis or Dharma Sastras also are books written by sages, but they are not the final authority. If there is anything in a Smriti which contradicts the Sruti, the Smriti is to be rejected.

## **The Itihasas**

The Friendly Treatises and the Commanding Treatises

There are four books under this heading: The Valmiki-Ramayana, the Yogavasishtha, The Mahabharata and the Harivamsa. These embody all that is in the Vedas, but only in a simpler manner. These are called the Suhrit-Samhitas or the Friendly Treatises, while the Vedas are called the Prabhu-Samhitas or the Commanding Treatises with great authority. These works explain the great universal truths in the form of historical narratives, stories and dialogues. These are very interesting volumes and are liked by all, from the inquisitive child to the intellectual scholar.

The Itihasas give us beautiful stories of absorbing interest and importance, through which all the fundamental teachings of Hinduism are indelibly impressed on one's mind. The laws of Smritis and the principles of the Vedas are stamped firmly on the minds of the Hindus through the noble and marvellous deeds of their great national heroes. We get a clear idea of Hinduism from these sublime stories.

The common man cannot comprehend the high abstract philosophy of the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras. Hence, the compassionate sages Valmiki

and Vyasa wrote the Itihasas for the benefit of common people. The same philosophy is presented with analogies and parables in a tasteful form to the common run of mankind.

The two well-known Itihasas (histories) are the epics (Mahakavyas), Ramayana and Mahabharata. They are two very popular and useful Sastras of the Hindus. The Ramayana was written by the sage Valmiki, and the Mahabharata by Vyasa.

## **The Ramayana**

The Ramayana, the Adi-Kavya or the first epic poem, relates the story of Sri Rama, the ideal man. It is the history of the family of the solar race descended from Ikshvaku, in which was born Sri Ramachandra, the Avatara of Lord Vishnu, and his three brothers. The ideal characters like Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Bharata and Sri Hanuman that we find in Ramayana firmly establish Hindu Dharma in our minds. The story of the birth of Rama and his brothers, their education and marriages, the exile of Sri Rama, the carrying off and recovery of Sita, his wife, the destruction of Ravana, the Rakshasa King of Lanka, and the reign of Sri Rama, are described in detail in Ramayana. How a man should behave towards his superiors, equals and inferiors, how a king ought to rule his kingdom, how a man should lead his life in this world, how he can obtain his release, freedom and perfection, may be learnt from this excellent epic. The Ramayana gives a vivid picture of Indian life. Even today our domestic, social and national ideals are copied from the noble characters in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The great national heroes stand even today as beacon-lights to guide and inspire the people of the whole world. The lives of Rama, Bharata and Lakshmana provide a model of fraternal affection and mutual service. Sri Hanuman stands as an ideal unique Karma Yogin. The life of Sita is regarded as the most perfect example of womanly fidelity, chastity and sweetness. The Ramayana is written in twenty-four thousand verses by Sri Valmiki.

## **The Mahabharata**

The Mahabharata is the history of the Pandavas and the Kauravas. It gives a description of the great war, the Battle of Kurukshetra, which broke out between the Kauravas and the Pandavas who were cousins and descendants of the lunar race. The Mahabharata is an encyclopaedia of Hindu Dharma. It is rightly called the fifth Veda. There is really no theme in religion, philosophy, mysticism and polity which this great epic does not touch and expound. It contains very noble moral teachings, useful lessons of all kinds, many beautiful stories and episodes, discourses, sermons, parables and dialogues which set forth the principles of morals and metaphysics. The Pandavas obtained victory through the grace of Lord Krishna. The Mahabharata is written in one hundred thousand verses by Sri Krishnadvaipayana Vyasa.

## **The Bhagavad-Gita**

The most important part of the Mahabharata is the Bhagavad-Gita. It is a marvellous dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna on the battle-field, before the commencement of the great war. Bhagavan Sri Krishna became the charioteer of Arjuna. Sri Krishna explained the essentials of Hindu religion to Arjuna. Just as the Upanishads contain the cream of the Vedas, so does the Gita contain the cream of the Upanishads. The Upanishads are the cows. Lord Krishna is the cowherd. Arjuna is the calf. The Gita is the milk. The wise men are those who drink the milk of the Gita.

The Gita is the most precious jewel of Hindu literature. It is a universal gospel. The Gita teaches the Yoga of Synthesis. It ranks high in the religious literature of the world.

Arjuna saw before him his dear relatives and teachers in the battle-field. He fainted and refused to fight against them. Then Lord Krishna imparted knowledge of the Self to Arjuna and convinced him that it was his duty to fight regardless of consequences. Afterwards Arjuna gave up his Moha, or delusion. All his doubts were cleared. He fought against the Kauravas and achieved victory.

## **Knowledge of Ancient Indian History and Culture**

The Mahabharata contains also the immortal discourse of Bhishma on Dharma, which he gave to Yudhishtira, when he was lying on the bed of arrows. The whole Mahabharata forms an encyclopaedia of history, morals and religion unsurpassed by any other epic in the world.

The Ramayana and the Mahabharata speak to us clearly about the ancient India, about her people, her customs, her ways of living, her arts, her civilisation and culture, her manufactures, etc. If you read these two books, you will come to know how great India once was, and you will be inspired to make her great once more. No other country has produced so many great men, great teachers, great Yogins, great Rishis, great prophets, great Acharyas, great kings, great heroes, great statesmen, great patriots and great benefactors, as India. The more you know of India and Hinduism, the more you will honour and love it and the more thankful to the Lord you will be that you were born in India as a Hindu. Glory to India! Glory to Hinduism! Glory to the seers of the Upanishads! Glory, glory to Lord Krishna, the author of the Song Divine!

## **The Puranas**

The Puranas are of the same class as the Itihasas. They have five characteristics (Pancha-Lakshana) viz., history, cosmology (with various symbolical

illustrations of philosophical principles), secondary creation, genealogy of kings and of Manvantaras. All the Puranas belong to the class of Suhrit-Samhitas.

Vyasa is the compiler of the Puranas from age to age; and for this age, he is Krishnadvaipayana, the son of Parasara.

The Puranas were written to popularise the religion of the Vedas. They contain the essence of the Vedas. The aim of the Puranas is to impress on the minds of the masses the teachings of the Vedas and to generate in them devotion to God, through concrete examples, myths, stories, legends, lives of saints, kings and great men, allegories and chronicles of great historical events. The sages made use of these things to illustrate the eternal principles of religion. The Puranas were meant, not for the scholars, but for the ordinary people who could not understand high philosophy and who could not study the Vedas.

The Darsanas are very stiff. They are meant only for the learned few. The Puranas are meant for the masses with inferior intellect. Religion is taught in a very easy and interesting way through these Puranas. Even to this day, the Puranas are popular. The Puranas contain the history of remote times. They also give a description of the regions of the universe not visible to the ordinary physical eye. They are very interesting to read and are full of information of all kinds. Children hear the stories from their grandmothers. Pundits and Purohitis hold Kathas in temples, on banks of rivers and in other important places. Agriculturists, labourers and bazaar people hear the stories.

## **The Eighteen Puranas**

There are eighteen main Puranas and an equal number of subsidiary Puranas or Upa-Puranas. The main Puranas are: Vishnu Purana, Naradiya Purana, Srimad Bhagavata Purana, Garuda (Suparna) Purana, Padma Purana, Varaha Purana, Brahma Purana, Brahmanda Purana, Brahma Vaivarta Purana, Markandeya Purana, Bhavishya Purana, Vamana Purana, Matsya Purana, Kurma Purana, Linga Purana, Siva Purana, Skanda Purana and Agni Purana. Of these, six are Sattvic Puranas and glorify Vishnu; six are Rajasic and glorify Brahma; six are Tamasic and they glorify Siva.

Neophytes or beginners in the spiritual Path are puzzled when they go through Siva Purana and Vishnu Purana. In Siva Purana, Lord Siva is highly eulogised and an inferior position is given to Lord Vishnu. Sometimes Vishnu is belittled. In Vishnu Purana, Lord Hari is highly eulogised and an inferior status is given to Lord Siva. Sometimes Lord Siva is belittled. This is only to increase the faith of the devotees in their particular Ishta-Devata. Lord Siva and Lord Vishnu are one.

The best among the Puranas are the Srimad Bhagavata and the Vishnu Purana. The most popular is the Srimad Bhagavata Purana. Next comes Vishnu Purana. A portion of the Markandeya Purana is well known to all Hindus as Chandi, or Devimahatmya. Worship of God as the Divine Mother is its theme. Chandi is read widely by the Hindus on sacred days and Navaratri (Durga Puja) days.

### **The Srimad Bhagavata Purana and the Ten Avataras**

The Srimad Bhagavata Purana is a chronicle of the various Avataras of Lord Vishnu. There are ten Avataras of Vishnu. The aim of every Avatara is to save the world from some great danger, to destroy the wicked and protect the virtuous. The ten Avataras are: Matsya (The Fish), Kurma (The Tortoise), Varaha (The Boar), Narasimha (The Man-Lion), Vamana (The Dwarf), Parasurama (Rama with the axe, the destroyer of the Kshatriya race), Ramachandra (The hero of Ramayana—the son of Dasaratha), who destroyed Ravana, Sri Krishna, The teacher of the Gita, Buddha (The prince-ascetic, founder of Buddhism) and Kalki (The hero riding on a white horse, who is to come at the end of the Kali-Yuga).

The object of the Matsya Avatara was to save Vaivasvata Manu from destruction by a deluge. The object of Kurma Avatara was to enable the world to recover some precious things which were lost in the deluge. The Kurma gave its back for keeping the churning rod when the Gods and the Asuras churned the ocean of milk. The purpose of Varaha Avatara was to rescue, from the waters, the earth which had been dragged down by a demon named Hiranyaksha. The purpose of Narasimha Avatara, half-lion and half-man, was to free the world from the oppression of Hiranyakasipu, a demon, the father of Bhakta Prahlada. The object of Vamana Avatara was to restore the power of the gods which had been eclipsed by the penance and devotion of King Bali. The object of Parasurama Avatara was to deliver the country from the oppression of the Kshatriya rulers. Parasurama destroyed the Kshatriya race twenty-one times. The object of Rama was to destroy the wicked Ravana. The object of Sri Krishna Avatara was to destroy Kamsa and other demons, to deliver His wonderful message of the Gita in the Mahabharata war, and to become the centre of the Bhakti schools of India. The object of Buddha Avatara was to prohibit animal sacrifices and teach piety. The object of the Kalki Avatara is the destruction of the wicked and the re-establishment of virtue.

### **The Tamil Puranas**

Lord Siva incarnated himself in the form of Dakshinamurti to impart knowledge to the four Kumaras. He took human form to initiate Sambandhar, Manikkavasagar, Pattinathar. He appeared in flesh and blood to help his devotees and relieve their sufferings. The divine Lilas of Lord Siva are recorded



in the Tamil Puranas like Siva Purana, Periya Purana, Siva Parakramam and Tiruvilayadal Purana.

## **The Upa-Puranas**

The eighteen Upa-Puranas are: Sanatkumara, Narasimha, Brihannaradiya, Sivarahasya, Durvasa, Kapila, Vamana, Bhargava, Varuna, Kalika, Samba, Nandi, Surya, Parasara, Vasishtha, Devi-Bhagavata, Ganesa and Hamsa.

## **Utility of the Puranas**

Study of the Puranas, listening to sacred recitals of scriptures, describing and expounding of the transcendent Lilas of the Blessed Lord—these form an important part of Sadhana of the Lord's devotees. It is most pleasing to the Lord. Sravana is a part of Navavidha-Bhakti. Kathas and Upanyasas open the springs of devotion in the hearts of hearers and develop Prema-Bhakti which confers immortality on the Jiva.

The language of the Vedas is archaic, and the subtle philosophy of Vedanta and the Upanishads is extremely difficult to grasp and assimilate. Hence, the Puranas are of special value as they present philosophical truths and precious teachings in an easier manner. They give ready access to the mysteries of life and the key to bliss. Imbibe their teachings. Start a new life of Dharma-Nishtha and Adhyatmic Sadhana from this very day.

## **The Agamas**

Another class of popular scriptures are the Agamas. The Agamas are theological treatises and practical manuals of divine worship. The Agamas include the Tantras, Mantras and Yantras. These are treatises explaining the external worship of God, in idols, temples, etc. All the Agamas treat of (i) Jnana or Knowledge, (ii) Yoga or Concentration, (iii) Kriya or Esoteric Ritual and (iv) Charya or Exoteric Worship. They also give elaborate details about ontology and cosmology, liberation, devotion, meditation, philosophy of Mantras, mystic diagrams, charms and spells, temple-building, image-making, domestic observances, social rules, public festivals, etc.

The Agamas are divided into three sections: The Vaishnava, the Saiva and the Sakta. The three chief sects of Hinduism, viz., Vaishnavism, Saivism and Saktism, base their doctrines and dogmas on their respective Agamas. The Vaishnava Agamas or Pancharatra Agamas glorify God as Vishnu. The Saiva Agamas glorify God as Siva and have given rise to an important school of philosophy known as Saiva-Siddhanta, which prevails in South India, particularly in the districts of Tirunelveli and Madurai. The Sakta Agamas or Tantras glorify God as the Mother of the Universe, under one of the many names of Devi.

The Agamas do not derive their authority from the Vedas, but are not antagonistic to them. They are all Vedic in spirit and character. That is the reason why they are regarded as authoritative.

### **The Vaishnava Agamas**

The Vaishnava Agamas are of four kinds: the Vaikhanasa, Pancharatra, Pratishthasara and Vijnanalalita. The Brahma, Saiva Kaumara, Vasishtha, Kapila, Gautamiya and the Naradiya are the seven groups of the Pancharatras. The Naradiya section of the Santi-Parva of the Mahabharata is the earliest source of information about the Pancharatras.

Vishnu is the Supreme Lord in the Pancharatra Agamas. The Vaishnavas regard the Pancharatra Agamas to be the most authoritative. They believe that these Agamas were revealed by Lord Vishnu Himself. Narada-Pancharatra says: "Everything from Brahma to a blade of grass is Lord Krishna." This corresponds to the Upanishadic declaration: "All this is, verily, Brahman—Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma."

There are two hundred and fifteen of these Vaishnava texts. Isvara, Ahirbudhnya, Paushkara, Parama, Sattvata, Brihad-Brahma and Jnanamritasara Samhitas are the important ones.

### **The Saiva Agamas**

The Saivas recognise twenty-eight Agamas, of which the chief is Kamika. The Agamas are also the basis of Kashmir Saivism which is called the Pratyabhijna system. The latter works of Pratyabhijna system show a distinct leaning to Advaitism. The Southern Saivism, i.e., Saiva Siddhanta and the Kashmir Saivism, regard these Agamas as their authority, besides the Vedas. Each Agama has Upa-Agamas. Of these, only fragmentary texts of twenty are extant. Lord Siva is the central God in the Saiva Agamas. They are suitable to this age, Kali Yoga. They are open to all castes and both the sexes.

### **The Sakta Agamas**

There is another group of scriptures known as the Tantras. They belong to the Sakta cult. They glorify Sakti as the World-Mother. They dwell on the Sakti (energy) aspect of God and prescribe numerous courses of ritualistic worship of the Divine Mother in various forms. There are seventy-seven Agamas. These are very much like the Puranas in some respects. The texts are usually in the form of dialogues between Siva and Parvati. In some of these, Siva answers the questions put by Parvati, and in others, Parvati answers, Siva questioning. Mahanirvana, Kularnava, Kulasara, Prapanchasara, Tantraraja, Rudra-Yamala, Brahma-Yamala, Vishnu-Yamala and Todala Tantra are the important works. The Agamas teach several occult practices some of which confer powers, while

the others bestow knowledge and freedom. Sakti is the creative power of Lord Siva. Saktism is really a supplement to Saivism.

Among the existing books on the Agamas, the most famous are the Isvara-Samhita, Ahirbudhnya-Samhita, Sanatkumara-Samhita, Narada-Pancharatra, Spanda-Pradipika and the Mahanirvana-Tantra.

## **The Six Darsanas**

These are the intellectual section of the Hindu writings, while the first four are intuitional, and the fifth inspirational and emotional. Darsanas are schools of philosophy based on the Vedas. The Agamas are theological. The Darsana literature is philosophical. The Darsanas are meant for the erudite scholars who are endowed with acute acumen, good understanding, power of reasoning and subtle intellect. The Itihasas, Puranas and Agamas are meant for the masses. The Darsanas appeal to the intellect, while the Itihasas, Puranas, etc., appeal to the heart.

Philosophy has six divisions—Shad-darsana—the six Darsanas or ways of seeing things, usually called the six systems or six different schools of thought. The six schools of philosophy are the six instruments of true teaching or the six demonstrations of Truth. Each school has developed, systematised and correlated the various parts of the Veda in its own way. Each system has its Sutakara, i.e., the one great Rishi who systematised the doctrines of the school and put them in short aphorisms or Sutras.

The Sutras are terse and laconic. The Rishis have condensed their thoughts in the aphorisms. It is very difficult to understand them without the help of commentaries by great sages or Rishis. Hence, there arose many commentators or Bhashyakaras. There are glosses, notes and, later, commentaries on the original commentaries.

The Shad-Darsanas (the six schools of philosophy) or the Shat-Sastras are: the NYAYA, founded by Gautama Rishi, the VAISESHIKA by Kanada Rishi, the SANKHYA by Kapila Muni, the YOGA by Patanjali Maharshi, the PURVA MIMAMSA by Jaimini, and the UTTARA MIMAMSA or VEDANTA by Badarayana or Vyasa. The Darsanas are divided into three pairs of aphoristic compositions which explain the philosophy of the Vedas in a rationalistic method of approach. They are: the Nyaya and the Vaisesika, the Sankhya and the Yoga, and the Mimamsa and the Vedanta. Each set of Sutras has got its Bhashya, Vritti, Varttika, Vyakhyana or Tika and Tippani.

## **Sutra**

Svalpaksharam-asandigdham

Saravad-visvatomukham

Astobham-anavadyam cha

Sutram sutravido viduh

A Sutra or an aphorism is a short formula with the least possible number of letters, without any ambiguity or doubtful assertion, containing the very essence, embracing all meanings, without any stop or obstruction and absolutely faultless in nature.

The Sutrakara or the composer of the aphorisms is said to be as happy as one would be while getting the first male child, if he is but able to reduce one letter in his abstruse Sutra of far-fetched words and ideas. The best example of the greatest, the tersest and the most perfect of Sutra literature is the series of aphorisms called the Ashtadhyayi composed by Panini. Panini is the father of all Sutrakaras from whom all others seem to have borrowed the method of composition. The Sutras are meant to explain a big volume of knowledge in short assertions suitable to be kept in memory at all times. The six Vedangas and the six systems of Hindu philosophy form the twelve sets of Sutra literature of the world. In addition to these, there are later compositions like the Narada-Bhakti Sutras, the Sandilya-Bhakti Sutras, etc., which also wish to assume an equal form with the famous Sutras mentioned above.

## **Bhashya**

Sutrartho varnyate yatra

Padaih sutranusaribhih

Svpadani cha varnyante

Bhashyam bhashyavido viduh

A Bhashya is an elaborate exposition, a commentary on the Sutras, with word by word meaning of the aphoristic precepts, their running translation, together with the individual views of the commentator or the Bhashyakara. The best and the exemplary Bhashya in Sanskrit literature is the one written by Patanjali on the Vyakarana Sutras of Panini. This Bhashya is so very famous and important that it is called the MAHABHASHYA and its celebrated author is specially called the BHASHYAKARA. Patanjali is the father of Bhashyakaras. The next important Bhashya is the one on the Mimamsa Sutras written by Sabara-Swamin who learnt the art from Patanjali's commentary. The third important Bhashya was written by Sankara on the Brahma Sutras, in close following with the

Sabara-Bhashya. The Bhashyas on the six sets of aphorisms dealing with Indian philosophy were written by Vatsyayana, Prasastapada, Vijnanabhikshu, Vyasa, Sabara and Sankara. On the Vedanta or Brahma Sutras, there are about sixteen Bhashyas, like those of Ramanuja, Madhva, Vallabha, Nimbarka, etc.

## **Vritti**

### **Sadvrittih sannibandhana**

A Vritti is a short gloss explaining the aphorisms in a more elaborate way, but not as extensively as a Bhashya. An example is Bodhayana's Vritti on the Brahma Sutras.

## **Varttika**

Uktanuktaduruktanam

Chinta yatra pravartate

Tam grantham varttikam prahuh

Varttikajnavichakshanah

A Varttika is a work where a critical study is made of that which is said and left unsaid or imperfectly said in a Bhashya, and the ways of making it perfect by supplying the omissions therein, are given. Examples are the Varttikas of Katyayana on Panini's Sutras, of Suresvara on Sankara's Upanishad-Bhashyas, and of Kumarila Bhatta on the Sabara-Bhashya on the Karma-Mimamsa.

## **Vyakhyana or Tika**

A Vyakhyana is a running explanation in an easier language of what is said in the original, with little elucidations here and there. A Vyakhyana, particularly of a Kavya, deals with eight different modes of dissection of the Sloka, like Pada-Chheda, Vighraha, Sandhi, Alankara, Anuvada, etc. This forms an important aspect in the study of Sanskrit Sahitya Sastra. An Anu-Vyakhyana—like the one written by Sri Madhva—is a repetition of what is already written, but in greater detail. An Anuvada is merely a running translation or statement of an abstruse text of the original. Tika is only another name for Vyakhyana. The best Vyakhyanas are of Vachaspati Misra on the Darsanas, especially on Sankara's Brahmasutra-Bhashya.

## **Tippani**

Tippani is just like a Vritti, but is less orthodox than the Vritti. It is an explanation of difficult words or phrases occurring in the original. Examples are Kaiyata's gloss on the Mahabhashya of Patanjali, Nagojibhatta's gloss on

Kaiyata's gloss, or Appayya's gloss on Amalananda's gloss on the Bhamati of Vachaspati Misra.

## **Other Scriptures**

The Tevaram and the Tiruvachakam which are the hymns of the Saiva saints of South India, the Divya-Prabandham of the Alvar saints of South India, the songs of Kabir, the Abhangas of Tukaram and the Ramayana of Tulasi Das—all of which are the outpourings of great realised souls—are wonderful scriptures. They contain the essence of the Vedas.

## **The Secular Writings**

### **The Subhashitas**

The Subhashitas are wise sayings, instructions and stories, either in poetry or in prose. Examples are Bhartrihari's three centuries of verses, the Subhashita-Ratna-Bhandagara and Somadeva Bhatta's Katha-Sarit-Sagara or Kshemendra's Brihat-Katha-Manjari. The Panchatantra and the Hitopadesa also belong to this category.

### **The Kavyas**

These are highly scholarly compositions in poetry, prose or both. The greatest of poetical Kavyas are those of Kalidas (The Raghuvamsa and Kumarasambhava), Bharavi (The Kiratarjuniya), Magha (The Sisupalavadha), Sri Harsha (The Naishadha). The best prose Kavyas in the whole of Sanskrit literature were written by Bhattabana (The Kadambari and Harshacharita), the great genius in classical Sanskrit. Among those containing both poetry and prose, the Champu-Ramayana and the Champu-Bharata are most famous. These are all wonderful masterpieces which will ever remain to glorify India's literary calibre.

### **The Natakas**

These are marvellously scholastic dramas embodying the Rasas of Sringara, Vira, Karuna, Adbhuta, Hasya, Bhayanaka, Bibhatsa and Raudra. It is told that none can write on the ninth Rasa, viz., Santi. It is attainable only on final Liberation. The best dramas are written by Kalidasa (Sakuntala), Bhavabhuti (Uttara-Rama-Charita), and Visakhadatta (Mudrarakshasa).

### **The Alankaras**

These are grand rhetorical texts, treating of the science of perfection and beauty of ornamental language and of effective composition with elegance and force, both in poetry and in prose. These are the fundamentals of Sanskrit Sahitya,

even superior to the Kavyas and the Natakas. The best Alankara-Granthas are those of Mammata (Kavyaprakasa) and Jagannatha (Rasagangadhara).

## **Conclusion**

These constitute the entirety of Sanskrit literature—sacred and secular. The Sruti is the root; the Smritis, Itihasas and Puranas are the trunk; the Agamas and Darsanas are the branches; and the Subhashitas, Kavyas, Natakas and Alankaras are the flowers of the tree of India's Culture.

The Smritis, the Itihasas, the Puranas, the Agamas and the Darsanas are only developments of the Veda. Their ultimate source is the Veda. Their one common aim is to enable man to annihilate his ignorance and attain perfection, freedom, immortality and eternal bliss through knowledge of God or the Eternal. Their purpose is to make man like God and one with Him.

## **The Significance of Shiva's Dance**

This cosmic dance of Shiva is called 'Anandatandava,' meaning the Dance of Bliss, and symbolizes the cosmic cycles of creation and destruction, as well as the daily rhythm of birth and death. The dance is a pictorial allegory of the five principle manifestations of eternal energy — creation, destruction, preservation, salvation, and illusion. According to Coomerswamy, the dance of Shiva also represents his five activities: 'Shrishti' (creation, evolution); 'Sthiti' (preservation, support); 'Samhara' (destruction, evolution); 'Tirobhava' (illusion); and 'Anugraha' (release, emancipation, grace).

The overall temper of the image is paradoxical, uniting the inner tranquillity, and outside activity of Lord Shiva.

## **A Scientific Metaphor**

Fritzof Capra in his article "The Dance of Shiva: The Hindu View of Matter in the Light of Modern Physics," and later in The Tao of Physics beautifully relates Nataraj's dance with modern physics. He says that "every subatomic particle not only performs an energy dance but also is an energy dance; a pulsating process of creation and destruction...without end...For the modern physicists, then Shiva's dance is the dance of subatomic matter.



The Hindu mythology, it is a continual dance of creation and destruction involving the whole cosmos; the basis of all existence and of all natural phenomena. To sum up, here's an excerpt from a beautiful poem by Ruth Peel:

"The source of all movement,  
Shiva's dance,  
Gives rhythm to the universe.  
He dances in evil places,  
In sacred,  
He creates and preserves,  
Destroys and releases.  
We are part of this dance  
This eternal rhythm,  
And woe to us if, blinded  
By illusions, We detach ourselves  
From the dancing cosmos,  
This universal harmony..."

## Hindu Sacred Texts Glossary

### A

**Abhimanyu** (अभिमन्यु): Son of Arjuna and Subhadra who was married to Uttara, daughter of King Virata. He was deceitfully killed by the Kauravas during Kurukshetra.

**Āchārya** (आचार्य): Teacher or Guru.

**Achyuta** (अच्युत): A synonym of Sri Vishnu.

**Adhiratha** (अधिरथ): Karna's foster-father.

**Adi Shankara** (आदि शङ्कर): The first Hindu philosopher who consolidated the principles of the Advaita Vedanta philosophy.

**Aditi** (अदिति): A goddess of the sky, consciousness, the past, the future and fertility.



**Advaita Vedanta** (अद्वैत वेदान्त): A school of Hindu philosophy often called a monistic or non-dualistic system which refers to the indivisibility of the Self (Atman) from the Whole (Brahman).

**Agastya** (अगस्त्य): A great sage whose life-story the Pandavas learnt while on pilgrimage to holy places, his wife Lopamudra was equally a great sage in her own right.

**Aghāsura** (अघासुर): A dragon sent by Kamsa to destroy Krishna

**Āgneyāstra** (आग्नेयास्त्र): Āgneyāstra is the fire weapon, incepted by God Agni, master of the flames.

**Agni** (अग्नि): The sacred Hindu fire god.[2]

**Agnihotra** (अग्निहोत्र): A sacrifice to God Agni.

**Ahi** (अहि): Means ("snake"), Vritra was also known in the Vedas as Ahi cognate with Azhi Dahaka of Zoroastrian mythology and he is said to have had three heads.

**Ahamkara** (अहंकार): A Sanskrit term that refers to the ego of one's self, the identification of one's own ego.

**Ahimsā** (अहिंसा): A religious concept which advocates non-violence and a respect for all life.

**Airāvata** (ऐरावत): Indra's elephant.

**Ajasat** (अजसत): The Prince who plots with Devadatta to kill Buddha

**Ajatashatru** (अजातशत्रु): Having no enemy, friend of all born things, an epithet of Yudhishtira.

**Akampana** (अकम्पन): Meaning (Unconquerable) - A rākshasa, maternal uncle of Ravana, slain by Hanumaān at seize.

**Akshayapatra** (अक्षयपत्र): A wonderful vessel given to Yudhishtira by the Sun god which held a never-failing supply of food.

**Alara** (अलर) : A famous sage, sought out by Buddha

**Alambasa** (अलम्बस): A Rakshasa friend of Duryodhana who had joined his forces but Satyaki compelled him to flee from the battlefield.

**Amarāvati** (अमरावती): The city of Indra

**Amarkantak** (अमरकंटक): Amarkantak is a unique natural heritage area in eastern Madhya Pradesh, India. This is the meeting point of the Vindhyas and the Satpuras, with the Maikal Hills being the fulcrum. This is the place from where the Narmada River, the Sone River and Johila River emerge.

**Ambā** (अम्बा), **Ambikā** (अम्बिका), **Ambālikā** (अम्बालिका): The three daughters of King of Benares, Eldest daughter Ambā was in love with King Shālwa

**Amrit** (अमृत): Ambrosia, the food of the gods, which makes the partaker immortal.

**Ananta** (अनन्त): Ananta may be 1. The thousand headed nāga that issued from Balrāma's mouth 2. Author and commentator of Katyayana sutra 3. Ananta was the name of present Shekhawati region of Rajasthan in India.

**Andhaka** (अंधक): Andhaka was the demon son of Shiva, and was created from a drop of his sweat. He was born blind. After birth, Andhaka was given to Hiranyaksha to be raised, as he had no sons. Later, Andhaka became the king of Hiranyaksha's kingdom.

**Anga** (अंग): Mlechchha kings, a Kaurava supporter.

**Angada** (अंगद): One of the monkey host; Son of Valī

**Aniruddha** (अनिरुद्ध): Son of Pradyumna (a rebirth of Shatrughana who married with Chārumati and Ushā

**Anjalikā** (अंजलिका): The greatest of Arjuna's arrows with which he slays Karna

**Anjanā** (अंजना): Mother of Hanumāna

**Anshumat** (अंशुमत): A mighty chariot-fighter

**Anusuya** (अनुसूया): Sati Anusuya was wife of the sage Atri and mother of **Dattatreya** (दत्तात्रेय) who is considered by some Hindus (in western India) to be an incarnation of the Divine Trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

**Apsarās** (अपसरा): Heavenly nymphs, The dancing girls of Indra's court

**Aquila** (अक्विला): Equivalent, Garuda; the divine eagle

**Araṇi** (अरणि): An upper and a lower piece of wood used for producing fire by attrition.

**Āraṇyaka** (आरण्यक): Part of the Hindu Śruti that discuss philosophy, sacrifice and the New Year holiday.

**Arjuna** (अर्जुन): The third of Pāndavas and Krishna's cousin. His doubts on the battle field led to Krishna expounding the Gita.[1]

**Artha** (अर्थ): Wealth, one of the objects of human life, the others being Dharma, (righteous-ness), Kama (satisfaction of desires), Moksha (spiritual salvation).

**Arundhati** (अरुंधति): Wife of sage Vashishta. She was one of the nine daughters of Kardama Prajapati and his wife Devahuti.

**Arya**: 'Noble or Pious.' Was also used as another name for ancient vedic Bharatas tribe, whose main rival tribe were the Dasas.

**Asamanja** (असमंज): Son of Sāgra

**Ashtavakra** (अष्टवक्र): A towering scholar while still in his teens.

**Ashta Lakshmi**: Eight aspects of goddess Lakshmi, symbolising eight sources of wealth

**Ashvatthāman** (अश्वत्थामा): Son of Dronacharya and last supreme commander of the Kaurava force, strong as a horse

**Ashvins** (अश्विन): The divine twins

**Ashwamedha** (अश्वमेध): The horse sacrifice

**Asvamedha Yajna** (अश्वमेध यज्ञ): A horse sacrifice.

**Ashwapati** (अश्वपति): Uncle of Bharata and Shatrughna

**Ashwasena** (अश्वसेन): Son of Naga Takshaka, who was saved by Indra, while Khandavavana was put into flame by Pandavas. Five mighty arrows shot by Karna

**Asita** (असित): A sage who held that gambling was ruinous and should be avoided by all wise people.

**Asmaka** (अस्मक): A Kaurava warrior who attacked Abhimanyu.

**Astra** (अस्त्र): A missile charged with power by a holy incantation.

**Asuras:** mythological lord beings in Indian texts who compete for power.

**Ātma** (आत्मा): The underlying metaphysical self, sometimes translated as spirit or soul.

**Ayodhyā** (अयोध्या): Unconquerable, The city in the country of Koshala

## B

**Binod:** The Father of intillegent son Birat

**Birat:** The intillegent son of Binod Timsina and Ganga Timsina

**Babhruvahana:** Babhruvahana was son of Arjuna by his wife Chitrāngadā.

**Badarikasram** (बद्रीकाश्रम): Badarikasram is a place sacred to Vishnu, near the Ganges in the Himalayas, particularly in Vishnu's dual form of Nara-Narayana.

**Bahlīka** (बाह्लिक), Dasharna (दशर्ण): States the kings of which were Kalinga, Magadha, friendly to the Pandavas, Matsya, Panchala, Salva.

**Bahu** (बाहु): A king of the Solar race. who was vanquished and driven out of his country by the tribes of Haihayas and TaIajanghas. He was father of Sagara.

**Bahuka** (बाहुक): The changed name of Nala, as a charioteer of Rituparna, the king of Ayodhya. Also other name of king Bahu.

**Baladeva** (बलदेव): Balarama, elder brother of Sri Krishna.

**Balarāma** (बलराम): Elder brother of Lord Krishna and manifestation of Sheshanaga.[1]

**Balarāma** (बलराम): An avatar or incarnation of Adishesha the thousand-hooded serpent on which Lord Mahavishnu reclines in Vaikuntha.

**Bali:** a demon king defeated by the god Vishnu.

**Bakāsura** (बकासुर): A voracious, cruel and terribly strong Rakshasa or demon who lived in a cave near the city of Ekachakrapura whom Bhima killed to the great relief of the citizens.

**Baṇāsura** (बाणासुर): Banasura was a thousand-armed asura and son of Bali. He was a powerful and terrible asura. All people even the king of earth and Devas

of heaven were afraid of him. Banasura was a follower of Shiva. He had a beautiful daughter named Usha.

**Behula** (बेहूला): The daughter of Saha, a merchant of Nichhani Nagar; weds Lakshmindara, mentioned in the story of Manasa Devi who was the daughter of Shiva.

**Bhadra** (भद्र): A mighty elephant

**Bhadrakālī** (भद्रकाली): Bhadrakālī is also known as the gentle Kali, who came into being by Devi's wrath, when Daksha insulted Shiva. She is the consort of Virabhadra.

**Bhagadatta** (भगदत्त): King of Pragjyotisha, a Kaurava ally.

**Bhagawān** (भगवान्): Form of address to Gods and great rishis, example- Bhagawan Sri Krishna, Narada, Vyasa. A Sanskrit word meaning "Holy or Blessed one". It is a title of veneration, often translated as "Lord" and refers to God.

**Bhagavad Gītā** (भगवद् गीता ): The national gospel contained in Mahābhārata, Part of the epic poem Mahabharata, located in the Bhishma–Parva chapters 23–40. A core sacred text of Hinduism and philosophy.

**Bhagavatī** (भगवती): Alias Pārvatī, Shiva's wife

**Bhagīratha** (भगीरथ): Son of Dilipa, king of Kosala who worshipped Shiva and brought down Ganges.

**Bhajan** (भजन): A Hindu devotional song. Great importance is attributed to the singing of bhajans within the Bhakti movement.

**Bhaktī** (भक्ति): A Sanskrit term that means intense devotion expressed by action (service). A person who practices bhakti is called bhakta.

**Bhaktī Yoga** (भक्ति योग): The Hindu term for the spiritual practice of fostering of loving devotion to God, called bhakti.[2]

**Bharadwāja** (भरद्वाज): A rishi, father of Yavakrida.

**Bharata** (भरत): Means "to be or being maintained"). Bharat may be 1. a name of Agni 2. a name of Rudra 3. one of the Adityas 4. Emperor Bharata, son of Dushyanta and Shakuntalā 5. Bharata (Ramayana), a son of Dasharatha, younger brother of Rama 6. Bharata Muni, the author of the Natyashastra 7. Bharata

(Bhagavata), the eldest of a hundred sons of a saintly king by name Rishabha Deva according to the Bhagavata purana.

**Bhārata** (भारत): Meaning ("descended from Bharata"). Bhārata may refer to 1. The Bhāratas, an Aryan tribe of the Rigveda 2. an early epic forming the core of the Mahabharata (allegedly comprising about a quarter of the extended epic) 3. the Republic of India (properly, Bhārata GaNarājya, भारत गणराज्य).

**Bhārgava** (भार्वग): Karna's divine weapon

**Bhaumāsura** (भौमासुर): A demon slain by Krishna

**Bhīma** (भीम): The second of Pāndavas who excelled in physical prowess as he was born of the wind-god.

**Bhīshma** (भीष्म): Bhīshma was son of Shāntanu, the great Knight and guardian of the imperial house of Kurus.

**Bhīshmaka** (भीष्मक): Raja of Kundalpur and father of Rukminī.

**Bhojas** (भोज): A branch of the Yadava clan belonging to Krishna's tribe.

**Bhumanyu** : Nameo of Son of Bharatha. He became emperor of India after Bharat.

**Bhuminjaya** (भुमिंजय): Another name of prince Uttara son of Virata who had proceeded to fight the Kaurava armies, with Brihannala as his charioteer.

**Bhurisravas** (भुरिश्रवस): Bhurisravas was a prince of the Balhikas and an ally of the Kauravas, who was killed in the great battle of the Mahabharata.

**Bhūta**: A ghost, imp, goblin. Malignant spirits which haunt cemeteries, lurk in trees, animate dead bodies, and delude and devour human beings.

**Bibhatsu** (बिभत्सु): One of Arjuna's name meaning a hater of unworthy acts.

**Brahmā** (ब्रह्मा): Creator of the universe, The Hindu creator god, and one of the Trimurti, the others being Vishnu and Shiva. He must not be confused with the Supreme Cosmic Spirit of Hindu philosophy Brahman.

**Brahmāstra** (ब्रह्मास्त्र): A divine weapon, irresistible, one given by Lord Brahma himself.

**Brahmachārin** (ब्रह्मचारिन): A religious student, unmarried, who lives with his spiritual guide, devoted to study and service.

**Brahmacharya** (ब्रह्मचर्य): Celibacy, chastity; the stage of life of Vedic study in which chastity and service are essential, The word Brahmacharya symbolises a person who is leading a life in quest of Brahma, or in other words a Hindu student

**Brahmadatta** (ब्रह्मदत्त): King of Benares

**Brahman** (ब्राह्मण): The signifying name given to the concept of the unchanging, infinite, immanent and transcendent reality that is the Divine Ground of all being.

**Brahmin** (ब्राह्मिन): One of four fundamental colours in Hindu caste (Varna) consisting of scholars, priests and spiritual teachers.

**Braj** (ब्रज): Braj (also known as Brij or Brajbhoomi) is a region in Uttar Pradesh of India, around Mathura-Vrindavan. It is considered to be the land of Krishna and is derived from the Sanskrit word vraja.

**Brihadaswa** (बृहदास्व): A great sage who visited the Pandavas during their forest hermitage and reminded them of King Nala of Nishadha who also lost his kingdom in the game of dice and who deserted his wife Damayanti because of a curse but ultimately regained both.[3]

**Brihadratha** (बृहद्रथ): Commander of three regiments reigned over Magadha and attained celebrity as a great hero, married the twin daughters of the Raja of Kasi. His two wives ate each half of a mango given by sage Kausika and begot half a child each. A Rakshasi recovered the two portions from a dustbin wherein they were thrown and when they accidentally came together, they became a chubby baby, which she presented to the king, saying it was his child, which later became known as Jarasandha.

**Brihadyumna** (बृहदयुम्न): A King, a disciple of sage Raibhya.

**Brihannala** (बृहन्नल): Name assumed by Arjuna while living at Virata's court in incognito. He taught arts to Uttarā, the princess of the kingdom of Virata.

**Brihaspati** (बृहस्पति): Father of Kacha and priest of devas

**Brihatbala** (बृहत्बल): A daring warrior who charged at Abhimanyu caught in the Kaurava army's net.

**Brindavan** (बृन्दावन): A town on the site of an ancient forest which is the region where Lord Krishna spent his childhood days. It lies in the Braj region.

## C

**Caste** (कास्ट): Portuguese word to describe in a western context the Hindu system of classification of peoples (jāti)

Diagram of chakras  
**Chakra** (चक्र): An energy node in the human body. The seven main chakras are described as being aligned in an ascending column from the base of the spine to the top of the head. Each chakra is associated with a certain colour, multiple specific functions, an aspect of consciousness, a classical element, and other distinguishing characteristics.

**Chala** (चल): A Kaurava warrior.

**Champā** (चम्पा): A city on banks of the Ganges river where Karna found as a babe by Adhiratha and Rādhā

**Chāndāla** (चांडाल): A person of a degraded caste, whose conduct was much below standard and whose cause pollution.

**Chandraketu** (चंद्रकेतु): A devotee of Manasā

**Channa** (चन्न) : A royal servant and head charioteer of Prince Siddhartha, who was to become the Buddha.

**Chānd Sadāgar** (चांद सदगर): A merchant-prince of Champaka Nagar. Manasā Devi woos the devotion of him

**Charachitra** (चरचित्र): A son of King Dhritarashtra who perished in the war.

**Caraka Samhitā** (चरक संहिता): An ancient Indian Ayurvedic text on internal medicine written by Caraka. It is believed to be the oldest of the three ancient treatises of Ayurveda.

**Chavadi**: Place of public assembly of the village. It is the property of the entire community. In it all public business is transacted, and it serves also as the village club the headquarters of the village police and guest house for travellers.

**Chedi** (चेदि): A kingdom of Shishupāla, old name of present Chanderi

**Chekitana** (चेकितान): Chekitana was son of Dhrishtaketu, Raja of the Kekayas, and an ally of the Pandavas.



**Chitra** (चित्र): A son of Dhritarashtra killed in the war.

**Chitraksha** (चित्राक्ष): One of the many sons of King Dhritarashtra who fell in the war.

**Chitrakūta** (चित्रकूट): Chitrakūta was in mountain forests where Rama, Sita and Lakshmana spent eleven and half years of their exile; The hermitages of Vālmīki, Atri, Sati Anusuya, Dattatreya, Maharshi Markandeya, Sarbhanga, Sutikshna were here; and here the principal trinity of the Hindu pantheon, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, took their incarnations.

**Chitrlekha** (चित्रलेखा): Chitrlekha was a friend of Usha and daughter of minister of Banasura. She was a talented lady who helped Usha to identify the young man, Aniruddha, seen in the dream of Usha. Chitrlekha through supernatural powers abducted Aniruddha from the palace of Krishna and brought him to Usha.

**Chitrasena** (चित्रसेन): King of the Gandharvas who prevented the Kauravas from putting up their camp near the pond where he himself had encamped.

**Chitrayudha** (चित्रयुद्ध): A Kaurava prince who laid down his life in the war.

**Chitravarma** (चित्रवर्मा): A brother of Duryodhana who was killed in the war

**Chitrangada** (चित्रांगद): Elder son of Santanu born of Matsyagandhi (Satyavati) who succeeded his father on the throne of Hastinapura.

**Chitrāngadā**: Chitrāngadā was one of Arjuna's wives. Arjuna travelled the length and breadth of India during his term of exile. In ancient Manipur in the eastern Himalayas he met Chitrāngadā, the daughter of the king of Manipur and married her. Babhrvahana was soon born to the couple. Babhrvahana would succeed his grandfather as king of Manipur.

**Chyavana** (च्यवन): A great rishi, husband of beautiful wife Sukanyā whom Ashvins beheld at her bath

## D

**Dāruka** (दारुक): Sri Krishna's charioteer.

**Dadhichi**: Dadhichi was a Vedic king, son of Atharvan, who turned a great Rishi. Dadhicha gave his bones to destroy Vritra, a brahmin, who became the head of the Asuras.

**Daityas** (दैत्य): Daityas were the children of Diti and the sage Kashyapa. They were a race of giants who fought against the gods.

**Daksha** (दक्ष): The skilled one, is an ancient creator god, one of the Prajapatis, the Rishis and the Adityas, and a son of Brahma.

**Dākshāyani** (दाक्षायणी): Dākshāyani is the Goddess of marital felicity and longevity; she is worshipped particularly by ladies to seek the long life of their husbands. An aspect of Devi, Dākshāyani is the consort of Shiva. Other names for Dākshāyani include Gaurī, Umā, Satī, Aparnā, Lalithā, Sivakāmini.

**Damayantī** (दमयंती): She is the wife of Nala whose story is told in the Mahabharata.

**Dandaka** (दंडक): A kingdom and a forest, had the same name, was a colonial state of Lanka under the reign of Ravana. Ravana's governor Khara ruled this province. It was the stronghold of all the Rakshasa tribes living in the Dandaka Forest.

**Dasharatha** (दशरथ): King of Ayodhya and Rama's father.

**Dashaarna** (दशार्ण): A country whose king attacked Bhagadatta's elephant in an effort to save Bhima.

**Dasharna** (दशार्ण): Dasharna was an ancient Indian kingdom in Malwa region near Mandsaur. The queen of Chedi kingdom and mother of Damayanti were daughters of king of Dasharna.

**Demons**: A supernatural being that has generally been described as a malevolent spirit. A demon is frequently depicted as a force that may be conjured and insecurely controlled, they were constantly at war with devas.

**Devadatta** (देवदत्त): Name of Arjuna's conch, also Buddha's cousin.

**Deva** (देव): The Sanskrit word for god or deity. It can be interpreted as a demi-god, deity or any supernatural being of high excellence.

**Devarata** (देवरत): Father of Yajnavalkya, the gods had given him a great bow and neither gods, nor gandharvas, nor asuras, nor rākshsa, nor men had might to string that.

**Devakī** (देवकी): Mother of Lord Krishna.

**Devala** (देवल): A sage who condemned the game of dice as an evil form of gambling and declared it unfit as entertainment for good people, as it usually offered scope for deceit and dishonesty.

**Devavrata** (देवव्रत): The eighth child of Santanu and Ganga who in time mastered the art yielding arms and learned the Vedas and Vedanta as also the sciences known to Sukra was crowned Yuvaraja (heir apparent), but later vowed to celibacy and was known as Bhishma.

**Devayani** (देवयानी): The beautiful daughter of Shukracharaya, preceptor of the demons, who fell in love with Kacha, son of Brihaspati, preceptor of the Devas.

**Devendra** (देवेन्द्र): King of the Gods.

**Devī** (देवी): The female version of a Deva, i.e. a female deity or goddess. Devi is considered to be the Supreme Goddess in Shaktism.

**Dhanvantari** (धन्वंतरी): An avatar of the Hindu God Vishnu. Dhanvantari appears in the Vedas as the physician of the gods, and is the god of Ayurvedic medicine.

**Dharma** (धर्म): Righteous course of conduct. Can mean law, rule or duty. Beings that live in harmony with Dharma proceed quicker towards moksha.

**Dharmagranthi** (धर्मग्रंथी): Assumed named of Nakula at Virata's court.

**Dharmananda** (धर्मनन्द): The delighted of Dharma, a name of Yudhishtira, the son of Dharma or Yama.

**Dharmavyadha** (धर्मव्याध): He possessed the secret of good life and lived in the city of Mithila. He was a meat-seller.

**Dhananjaya** (धनञ्जय): One of the names of Arjuna.

**Dhanusaksha** (धनुसक्ष): A great sage whom Medhavi, son of sage Baladhi, once insulted. He took the form of a bull and butted at that mountain and broke it to pieces. Then Medhavi fell down dead.

**Dhaumya** (धौम्य): Preceptor of the Pandavas, who accompanied them during their exile to the Kurujangala forest, singing Sama hymns addressed to Yama, Lord of Death.

**Dhrishtadyumna** (धृष्टद्युम्न): Supreme commander of the Pandava forces and twin brother of Draupadi.

**Dhrishtaketu** (धृष्टकेतु): Dhrishtaketu may be 1. A son of Dhrishtadyumna. 2. A son of Shishupala, king of Chedi, and an ally of the Pandavas. 3. A king of the Kekayas, also an ally of the Pandavas. 4. Son of Satyadhriti. 5. Son of Nriga.

**Dhritarāshtra** (धृतराष्ट्र): Elder son of Vichitravirya and Ambika, born blind, father of Duryodhana.

**Dharmaputra** (धर्मपुत्र): The son of Yama, epithet of Yudhishtira.

**Dhartarashtras** (धार्तराष्ट्र): Sons of Dhritarashtra

**Dhruva** (ध्रुव): Dhruva was the prince blessed to eternal existence and glory as the Pole Star (Dhruva Nakshatra in Sanskrit) by Lord Vishnu. The story of Dhruva's life is often told to children as an example for perseverance, devotion, steadfastness and fearlessness.

**Dhumrāksha** (धुमराक्ष): The Grey-eye rākshasha appointed by Rāvana who was slain by Hanumāna.

**Dilīpa** (दिलीप): Son of Anshumat and father of Bhāgīratha.

**Dīpāvalī** (दीपावली, दिवाली): Lit. a row of lamps. A significant 5-day festival in Hinduism occurring between mid October and mid November. It is also popularly known as the Festival of Lights.

**Draupadī** (द्रौपदी): Daughter of King Drupada, King of Panchala, who was born from fire. She was the sister of Dhrishadyumna. She married all the five Pandavas though Arjuna had won her in the Swayamvara, because of the vow that they would share everything in common.

**Droṇa** (द्रोण): A Brāhman discovered by Bhīshma, Son of a Brahmana named Bharadwāja; married a sister of Kripa and a son Aswathama was born to them; learnt military art from Parasurama, the maser. Later he became the instructor to the Kaurava and Pandava princes in the use of arms. He was slain by Dhrishtadyumna in Mahabharata war.

**Drupada** (द्रुपद): King of Panchala, Drona's friend, father of Draupadi who became the wife of the Pandavas

**Duhsāsana** (दुःशासन): brother of Duryodhana who dragged Draupadi into the assembly hall and attempted to strip her naked after she had been lost as a wager by Yudhishtira. He eventually gave up when Krishna came to Draupadi's aid.

The pandava Bhima killed him at Kurukshetra and drank his blood in accordance with the vow he had taken.[1]

**Durdhara** (दुर्धर): A son of Dhritarashtra killed by Bhima in the war.

**Durgā** (दुर्गा): A form of Devi, the supreme goddess. She is depicted as a woman riding a lion with multiple hands carrying weapons and assuming mudras.

**Durjaya** (दुर्जय): A brother of Duryodhana who was sent to attack Bhima, to save Karna's life but lost his own.

**Durmarsha** (दुर्मर्ष): A son of Dhritarashtra killed by Bhima.

**Durmata** (दुर्मत): A son of Dhritarashtra who was killed by Bhima.

**Durmukha** (दुर्मुख): A chariot-borne warrior on the Kaurava side.

**Durvāsa** (दुर्वस): An ancient sage known for his anger who visited the Kauravas. Duryodhana asked him to visit his cousins, the Pandavas, hoping that they would incur his wrath.[1]

**Durvishaha** (दुर्विषह): A warrior fighting on the Kaurava side.

**Duryodhana** (दुर्योधन): The eldest son of the blind king Dhritarashtra by Queen Gandhari, the eldest of the one hundred Kaurava brothers, and the chief antagonist of the Pandavas.

**Dushkarma** (दुष्कर्म): A warrior belonging to the Kaurava side.

**Dushyanta** (दुष्यंत): A valiant king of the Lunar, race, and descended from Puru. He was husband of Sakuntala, by whom he had a son, Bharata. The loves of Dushyanta and Sakuntala, her separation from him, and her restoration through the discovery of his token-ring in the belly of a fish, form the plot of Kalidasa's celebrated play Sakuntala.

**Dussaha** (दुस्सह): A son of Dhritarashtra killed by Bhima.

**Dvaita** (द्वैत): A branch of Hindu philosophy, founded by Shri Madhvacharya that advocates dualism and stresses a strict distinction between God and souls.

**Dvaitavana** (द्वैतवन): Dvaita Forest or Dvaitavana was situated to the south of the Kamyaka Forest. It contained within it a lake called the Dwaita lake. It was on the south-western outskirts of Kurujangala, near the borders of the desert

(northern extension of the Thar desert into Haryana) (3,176). It also lay on the banks of the Saraswati River (known there as the Bhogavati) (3-24,176).

**Dwaitayana** (द्वैतायन): A forest where the Kaurava, cows were being bred and housed.

**Dwāarakā** (द्वारका): Krishna renounced war in Mathura for the greater good and founded and settled in Dwāarakā. Leaving the Vrishnis people in Dwaraka, Krishna returned to Mathura and killed Kamsa (his maternal uncle) and Kālayavans demon and made Ugrasen (his maternal grandfather) the king of Mathura.

**Dyumatsena** (द्युमतसेन): King of Shālwas and father of Satyavān.

## E

**Ekachakra** (एकचक्र): It was a city where the Pandavas are said to have lived here with their mother, Kunti, when they were exiled to the forest and escaped from the burning of house of lac.

**Ekalavya** (एकलव्य): He was a young prince of the Nishadha tribes, who achieves a skill level parallel to the great Arjuna, despite Drona's rejection of him. He was a member of low caste and he wished to study in the gurukulam of Dronacharya.

## F

**Fire-God:** Same as Agni.

**Flute:** Lord Krishna had a flute (called a Bansuri in Indian languages) which he used to play in the woods and all the herd-girls of Braj used to go out on the voice of this flute.

## G

**Gajasura** (गजासुर): Gajasura (elephant demon) is the name used to refer to demon Nila when he took the form of an elephant and attacked Shiva. He was destroyed by Ganapati.

**Ganapati** (गणपति): Lord of the territory, The fulfiller of desire, the god of merchants, Second son of Shiva and Pārvati. Amanuensis of Vyasa who agreed

to write down without pause or hesitation the story of the Mahabharata dictated by Vyasa.

**Ganges** (गंगा): A holy river in Northern India, believed to be a goddess by Hindus (see Ganges in Hinduism), Equivalent Ganges, The story of the birth of the Ganges was told to Rama and Laxmana by Vishvamitra.

**Gaṇeśha** (गणेश): The god of good fortune, commonly identified for his elephant head.

**Gaṇeśa Chaturthī** (गणेश चतुर्थी): Ganesh Chaturthi is an occasion or a day on which Lord Ganesha, the son of Shiva and Parvati, makes his presence on earth for all his devotees. It is the birthday of Lord Ganesha. The festival is observed in the Hindu calendar month of Bhaadrapada, starting on the shukla chaturthi.

**Gāndhārī** (गांधारी): Dhritarashtra's wife and queen mother of the Kauravas.

**Gandharva s** (गंधर्व): A class of celestial beings regarded as specialists in music.

**Gāṇḍīva** (गाण्डीव): Arjuna's most potent bow.

**Gangadwara** (गंगद्वार): A place where sage Agastya and his wife performed penance.

**Garuda** (गरुड): It is a large mythical bird or bird-like creature that appears in both Hindu and Buddhist mythology.

**Gaurī** (गौरी): Gaurī or Dākshāyani is the Goddess of marital felicity and longevity; she is worshipped particularly by ladies to seek the long life of their husbands. An aspect of Devi, Dākshāyani is the consort of Shiva.

**Gāyatrī** (गायत्री): A revered mantra in Hinduism, found in the Yajur Veda.

**Ghatotkacha** (घटोत्कच): Son of Bhima from demoness Hidimba.

**Girivraja** (गिरिव्रज): A Wealthy city in Kekaya Kingdom also called Rajagriha.

**Gītā** (गीता): See Bhagwad Gita

**Gopa s** (गोप): Equivalent, herd-boys

**Gopāla** (गोपाल): Name of Krishna indicating his origin as a god of flocks and herds.

**Gopīs** (गोपी): Gopi is a word of Sanskrit origin meaning 'cow-herd girls'.

**Govardhan** (गोवर्धन): Govardhan is a hill located near the town of Vrindavan in India.

**Govinda** (गोविन्द): One of the epithets of Sri Krishna and Vishnu; it means a cow-keeper and refers to Krishna's occupation in Gokula, the colony of cowherds

**Grihastha** (गृहस्थ): The second of the four phases(Purushartha) of a man, when a person gets married and settles down in life and begets children.

**Guha** (गुह): King of Nishādha

**Guru** (गुरु): Revered preceptor, A spiritual teacher. In contemporary India, the title and term "Guru" is widely used within the general meaning of "wise man".

**Guru Pūrṇimā** (गुरु पूर्णिमा): The day of full moon, Purnima, in the month of Ashadh of the Hindu calendar is traditionally celebrated by Hindus as Guru Pūrṇimā. On this day, devotees offer puja (worship) to their Guru.

## H

**Hamsa** (हंस), Hidimbā (हिडिम्बा), Kamsa (कंस): Allies of King Jarasandha; the last married the two daughters of Jarasandha. Also Krishna's step-uncle whom Krishna killed.

**Halayudha** (हलयुद्ध): Plough-weaponed, an epithet of Balarama who wielded a plough as his weapon.

**Hanumāna** (हनुमान): Wise and learned monkey devotee of Sri Rama, who possessed extraordinary powers of discrimination and wisdom and who searched and found Sita in her confinement in Lanka. Son of Vayu and Anjana.

**Hari** (हरि): Hari is another name of Vishnu or God in Vaishnavism, Smarta or Advaitan Hinduism, and appears as the 650th name in the Vishnu sahasranama.

**Harivamsa** (हरिवंश): Harivamsa is an important work of Sanskrit literature. It is a kind of appendix to the Mahābhārata, that runs to 16,375 verses and focuses specifically on the life of Lord Krishna.

**Hastināpura** (हस्तिनापुर): Hastinapura is the capital and the kingdom of the Kauravas, the descendants of Kuru, which include the Pandavas. The throne of this city is the prize over which the great war of the epic is fought.



**Hidimbā** (हिडिम्बा): A powerful Asura, who had yellow eyes and a horrible aspect. He was a cannibal, and dwelt in the forest to which the Pandavas retired after the burning of their house. He had a sister named Hidimbi, whom he sent to lure the Pandavas to him; but on meeting with Bhima, she fell in love with him. By his mother's desire Bhima married her, and by her had a son named Ghatotkacha.

**Hindu scripture:** Sacred texts of Hinduism mostly written in Sanskrit. Hindu scripture is divided into two categories: Śruti – that which is heard (i.e. revelation) and Smṛiti – that which is remembered (i.e. tradition, not revelation).

**Hinduism:** A worldwide religious tradition that is based on the Vedas and is the direct descendent of the Vedic religion. It encompasses many religious traditions that widely vary in practice, as well as many diverse sects and philosophies.

**Hiranyakashipu** (हिरण्यकश्यप): Hiranyakashipu was an Asura, and also a King of Dravida whose younger brother, Hiranyaksha was killed by Varaha, one of the avatars of Vishnu. Identical with Shishupāla and Rāvana.

**Hiranyaksha** (हिरण्याक्ष): Hiranyaksha was an Asura of the Daitya race, and a King of Dravida who was killed by Lord Vishnu after he took the Earth to the bottom of the ocean. He had an older brother named Hiranyakashipu.

**Holikā** (होलिका): Holika was a demoness who was killed on the day of Holi. She was the sister of King Hiranyakashipu. The story of Holika's conflict signifies the triumph of good over evil.

**Hrishiksha** (हृषीकेश): Krishna.

## I

**Ikshvaku** (इक्ष्वाकु): The word Ikshvaku means "bitter gourd". Ikshvaku was the first king and founder of the Sun Dynasty in Vedic civilization in ancient India. He was the son of Manu (the first man on earth), sired by the Sun God, Surya. Rama, of the epic Ramayana is a descendant of the house of Ikshvaku. So are Bhagiratha, Dasharatha, Luv and Kusa.

**Ilvala** (ईवल): Ilvala and Vatapi were asuras, the rulers of Badami, formerly known as Vatapi, was named after asura king Vatapi.

**Indra** (इन्द्र): King of the Gods. The chief deity of the Rigveda, the god of weather and war as well as Lord of Svargaloka in Hinduism.

**Indrajit** (इन्द्र जीत): Son of Ravana, King of Lanka, also known as Meghanath, who conquered Indra, the Lord of Gods and received his name 'Indra-jit' (Victor of Indra), and who was killed by Rama's brother Lakshmana.

**Indraprastha** (इन्द्रप्रस्थ): Indraprastha (City of Indra) was a major northern city in ancient India that was the capital of the kingdom led by the Pandavas in the Mahabharata epic, located upon the banks of the river Yamuna, believed to be the site of present Purana Qila, in the modern national capital of Delhi.

**Indrasena** (इन्द्रसेन): A kinsman of the Pandavas, son of Nala and Damayanti.

**Indrasenā** (इन्द्रसेना): Daughter of Nala and Damayanti.

**Indrakila** (इन्द्रकिला): A mountain Arjuna passed on his way to the Himalayas to practise austerities to acquire powerful new weapons from Lord Mahadeva.

**Iraavan** (इरवन): Arjuna's son by a Naga princess Ulupi who fell in the battle on the eighth day, fought on the side of the Pandavas, killed by the Rakshasa Alumvusha.

**Ishvara** (ईश्वर): A Hindu philosophical concept of God referring to the Supreme Being which is the lord and the ruler of everything. Hinduism uses the term Ishvara exclusively to refer to the Supreme God in a monotheistic sense.

## J

**Jāmbavān** (जाम्बवान): Jambavan or Jamvanta is a bear in Hinduism and believe to lived from Treta Yuga to kaliYuga.

**Jambudvīpa** (जम्बुद्वीप): The name of the dvīpa ("continent") of the terrestrial world, as envisioned in the cosmologies of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, which is the realm where ordinary human beings live. Its name is said to derive from a Jambu tree.

**Jambumali** (जम्बुमली): The warrior Ravana sends to slay Hanuman when Hanuman not satisfied with finding Sita dashed about the Ashoka grove and broke the trees and spoiled the pavilions.

**Janaka** (जनक): King of Mithila, a great Rajarishi; father of Sita, wife of Rama.

**Janamejaya** (जनमेजय): A king who conducted a great sacrifice for the well being of the human race.

**Janārdana** (जनार्दन): A name of Krishna

**Jarāsandha** (जरासंध): A rākshasa father-in-law of Kamsa, Son of Brihadratha. Mighty king of Magadha of whose prowess all Kshatriyas were afraid. Killed by Bhima in a thirteen-day non-stop physical combat: with Sri Krishna and Arjuna as witnesses.

**Jarita** (जरित), Laputa (लपुत): Female companions of a saranga bird, who was a rishi named Mandapala in his previous birth when he was refused admission to heaven because he was childless.

**Jalāsura** (जलासुर): A demon killed by Bhima.

**Japa** (जप): A spiritual discipline in which a devotee repeats a mantra or the name of God. The repetition can be aloud, just the movement of lips or in the mind.

**Jātaka** (जातक): The Jataka is a voluminous body of folklore and mythic literature, primarily associated with the Theravada Buddhist tradition, as written in the Pali language (from about the 3rd century, C.E.); The story of Rama is told in one of Jātakas.

**Jatāsura** (जटासुर): A Rakshasa who disguised himself as a Brahman and carried Yudhishtira, Sahadeva, Nakula, and Draupadi. He was overtaken and killed by Bhima.

**Jatāyū** (जटायू): Jatāyū was king of all the eagles-tribes, the son of Aruna and nephew of Garuda. A demi-god who has the form of an (eagle), he tries to rescue Sita from Ravana, when Ravana is on his way to Lanka after kidnapping Sita. His brother was Sampatī

**Jaya** (जय): A son of King Dhritarashtra, who was killed by Bhima in the war

**Jayadratha** (जयद्रथ): A warrior on the side of Kauravas who closed the breach effected by Abhimanyu in the Chakravyuha military formation by Dronacharya and trapped him inside.

**Jayatsena** (जयत्सेन): A kinsman of the Pandavas.

**Jayatsena** (जयत्सेन): A warrior fighting on the side of Kauravas.

**Jīwal** (जीवल): The charioteer of Rituparna, king of Ayodhya, who accompanied with Bahuka.

**Jnana** (ज्ञान): Knowledge of the eternal and real

## K

**Kacha** (कच): Grandson of sage Angiras and son of Brihaspati, who went to seek knowledge under Sukracharya as a brahmacharin. Devayani, the preceptor's lovely daughter, fell in love with him. The Asuras (demons) suspecting him of wanting to steal the secret of reviving the dead, killed him a number of times. But due to Devayani's love for him, her father brought him back to life every time he was killed. Ultimately the secret was learnt by the devas who then succeeded in defeating the asuras.

**Kagola** (कगोल): A disciple of the great sage and teacher of Vedanta, Uddalaka. Although virtuous and energetic, he lacked the intelligence needed to master the Vedas. He was also the father of Ashtavakra, whose legendary crookedness was a result of his twisting in the womb whenever Kagola made a mistake in reciting the Vedas.[1]

**Kaikeyī** (कैकेयी): She was the youngest of King Dasharatha's three wives and a queen of Ayodhya. She was the mother of Bharata.

**Kailāsh** (कैलास): It is a peak in the Gangdisê mountains, the source of rivers in Asia—the Indus River, the Sutlej River, and the Brahmaputra River—and is considered as a sacred place in four religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Bön faith. The mountain lies near Lake Manasarowar and Lake Rakshastal in Tibet.

**Kaitabh** (कैतभ): Kaitabh is an asura associated with Hindu religious cosmology. He along with his companion, Madhu, originated from one of the ears of God Vishnu. Kaitabh and Madhu were designed to annihilate Brahma.

**Kālayāvan** (कालयावन): Kālayāvan was an asura who surrounded Mathura with an army of thirty million monstrous friends. Then Krishna departed to build a city of Dwārka amidst sea, transported all his people to this city and left them in Dwārka. Then Krishna returned and slew Kālayāvan.

**Kāl-Purush** (काल-पुरुष): The time-man, Bengali name of Orion.

**Kali** (कलि): Kali was a demon, the personified spirit of the Fourth yuga who possesses Nala.

**Kālī Yuga** (काली युग): Kālī Yuga (lit. Age of Kali, also known as The Age of Darkness), is one of the four stages of development that the world goes through as part of the cycle of Yugas, as described in Hindu scriptures, the others being Dwapara Yuga, Treta Yuga, and Satya Yuga.

**Kālī** (काली): A dark, black aspect of the mother-goddess Devi whose consort is Shiva.

**Kālindī** (कालिन्दी): Kālindī was daughter of the Surya (Sun) who marries Lord Krishna while he was ruling at Dwarka, Kālindī is also another name for the river Yamuna in northern India.

**Kāliyā** (कालिया): Kāliyā was the name of a poisonous hydra or Nāga living on the bank of Yamuna River. Kāliyā was quelled by Krishna and sent to his abode in Ramanaka Dwīpa.

**Kāl nāginī** (काल नागिनी): A serpent who kills Lakshmindara, the son of Chand Sadagar who was a merchant-prince of Champaka Nagar.

**Kalki** (कल्कि): The tenth Avatar of Vishnu who is yet to come and will appear as a man on a horse at the end of Kali Yug.

**Kāma** (काम): Best understood as aesthetics, the definition of Kama involves sensual gratification, sexual fulfillment, pleasure of the senses, love, and the ordinary enjoyments of life regarded as one of the four ends of man (purusharthas).

**Kāmadeva** (कामदेव): Kāmadeva is the Hindu god of love. He is represented as a young and handsome winged man who wields a bow and arrows.

**Kamboja s** (कम्बोज): Enemies of the Kauravas whom Karna had defeated

**Kāmadhenu** (कामधेनु): Kamadhenu was a divine cow believed to be the mother of all cows. Like her child Nandini, she could grant any wish for the true seeker. Kamadhenu provided Vasishtha with his needs for the sacrifices. Kamadhenu (kama-dhenu, 'wish-cow'), was a miraculous cow of plenty who could give her owner whatever he desired.

**Kampilya** (कम्पिल्य): Capital of the Panchala Kingdom ruled by Drupada.

**Kamsa** (कंस): Maternal Uncle of Sri Krishna and son of Ugrasena, also son-in-law of Jarasandha, whom Sri Krishna killed.

**Kamyaka Forest** (काम्यक वन): Kamyaka forest is mentioned in Mahabharata being situated at the head of the Thar desert, near the lake Trinavindu was situated on the western boundary of the Kuru Kingdom, on the banks of the Saraswati River. It lay to the west of the Kurukshetra plain.

**Kanika** (कणिक): Minister of Shakuni.

**Kanka** (कंक): Assumed name of Yudhishtira at Virata's court.

**Kaṇva** (कण्व): Father of Shakuntala.

**Kanyā pūjā** (कन्या पूजा): A Hindu custom to worship virgin girls as a symbol of the pure basic creative force.

**Kapila** (कपिल ऋषि): A Vedic sage credited as one of the founders of the Samkhya school of philosophy. He is prominent in the Bhagavata Purana, which features a theistic version of his Samkhya philosophy.

**Karkotaka** (कर्कोटक): The naga who bit Nala at the request of Indra, transforming Nala into a twisted and ugly shape.

**Kartavirya Arjuna** (कार्तवीर्य अर्जुन): Kārtavīrya Arjuna was King of Mahishmati, kshatriya of Ramayana period believed to have a thousand arms. He had beheaded Jamadagni, father of Parashurama. In revenge, Parashurama killed the entire clan of Kartavirya Arjuna. Ravana was comprehensively defeated and was put to humiliation by him.

**Karma** (कर्म): A Sanskrit term that comprises the entire cycle of cause and effect.

**Karma Yoga** (कर्म योग): The practise of disciplining action. Karma yoga focuses on the adherence to duty (dharma) while remaining detached from the reward. It states that one can attain Moksha (salvation) by doing his duties in an unselfish manner.[2]

**Karṇa** (कर्ण): A matchless warrior, son of the Sun god and Kunti. Disciple of Parasurama. Also son of Radha, his foster-mother, and was known as Radheya.

**Kārtavīrya** (कार्तवीर्य): A great warrior who defeated Ravana, King of Lanka.

**Kārtikeya** (कार्तिकेय): Commander of the armies of the devas, A god born out of a magical spark created by Shiva, his father. His brother is Ganesha.

**Kashyapa** (कश्यप): An ancient sage, father of the Devas, Asuras, Nagas and all of humanity. He is married to Aditi, with whom he is the father of Agni and the Savitrs. His second wife, Diti, begot the Daityas. Diti and Aditi were daughters of King Daksha and sisters to Sati, Shiva's consort. One of Dashratha's counsellors also.

**Kauravas** (कौरव): Kaurava is a Sanskrit term, that means a descendant of Kuru, alternate name of sons of Dhritarashtra.

**Kausalyā** (कौसल्या): She was the eldest of King Dasharatha's three wives and a queen of Ayodhya. She was the mother of Rama.

**Kausikam** (कौसिकम्): A sage who learnt from Dharmavyadha the secret of Dharma, of performing one's duty.

**Kaustubha** (कौस्तुभः): is a divine jewel - the most valuable stone "Mani", which is in the possession of lord Vishnu.

**Kekaya** (केकय): A brave warrior on the Pandava side into whose chariot Bhima got during the fighting on the sixth day. Usinaras, the Sibi, the Madras, and the Kekayas were the direct descendants of Yayati's son Anu.

**Kesava** (केसव): One of the names of Sri Krishna.

**Keshinī** (केशिनी): Wife of Sāgara

**Ketama** (केतम): Another chief whose head was cut off by Drona.

**Ketu** (केतु): Ketu is generally referred to as a "shadow" planet. It has a tremendous impact on human lives and also the whole creation. Astronomically, Ketu and Rahu denote the points of intersection of the paths of the Sun and the Moon as they move on the celestial sphere.

**Khaṇḍavaprastha** (खाण्डवप्रस्थ): The ancient capital from where the ancestors of Pandavas, Nahusha and Yayati ruled. The Pandavas rebuilt the ruined city and erected palaces and forts and renamed it Indraprastha.

**Khandava Vana** (खाण्डववन): Khandava Vana was an ancient forest mentioned in the epic Mahabharata, inhabited by Naga tribes. It lay to the west of Yamuna river, in modern-day Delhi territory. Pandavas cleared this forest to construct their capital city called Indraprastha.

**Khara** (खर): Khara was younger brother of Rāvana who was slain by Rama.

**Kichak a** (किचक): Sudeshna's brother, commander-in-chief of Virata's army, who made advances to Sairandhri (Draupadi). He was invited to meet her at night at the ladies dancing hall and was met instead by Valala (Bhima) dressed up as a female who killed him (Kichaka).

**Khir** (खिर): The grand son of Krishana.

**Kinnars** (किन्नर): Human birds with instruments of music under their wings.

**Kirāta** (किरात): Huntsman, The non-Aryan aborigines of the land. They are mentioned along with Cinas for Chinese. Kiratas are believed to be of Tibeto-Burman origin.

**Kirmira** (किर्मीर): Kirmira was a Rakshasa, the brother of Bakasura, who lived in the Kamyaka Forest, and used to terrorize the Rishis who inhabited that forest. He ran into the Pandavas when they began their exile in the Kamyaka forest. Upon learning that Bheema was present, who had slain his brother Bakasura, the Rakshasa then challenged the Pandava to fight. After a fierce battle, Bhishma choked Kirmira to death.

**Kishkindhā** (किष्किन्धा): Kishkindhā was the kingdom ruled by a Vanara King Sugreeva, the younger brother of Bali, during the Ramayana period. This was the kingdom where he ruled with the assistance of his most intelligent minister, Hanuman.

**Kosala** (कोशल): Kosala was an ancient Indian Aryan kingdom, corresponding roughly in area with the region of Oudh. Its capital was Ayodhya, where Rama was born.

**Kripa** (कृपा): The concept of Divine Grace in Hinduism, especially in Bhakti Yoga.

**Kripāchārya** (कृपाचार्य): Aswathama's uncle who advocated a combined assault on Arjuna in battle as against Karna's boast that he could take him on single-handed.

**Krishṇa** (कृष्ण): The eighth avatar of Vishnu, one of the most worshipped by many Hindus. Krishna is famous for his lecture to Arjuna written in the Bhagavad Gita.

**Krishna-Dwaipāyana** (कृष्ण द्वैपायन): Another name of Sage Vyasa.



**Krishna Janmashtami** (कृष्ण जन्माष्टमी): A Hindu festival celebrating the birth of Lord Krishna, an avatar of Hindu deity Vishnu.

**Krauncha** (क्रौंच): Curlew-heron.

**Krauncha-Vyuha** (क्रौंच व्युह): military formation on a pattern supposed to resemble a heron with outstretched beak and spreading wings. In ancient Indian practice, armies were arrayed for battle in formations of definite patterns, each of which had a name such as Chakra, or Kurma or Krauncha, or Makara according to a real or fancied resemblance.

**Kritavarma** (कृतवर्म): A notable Yadava warrior fighting on the side of Kaurava forces.

**Kshatriya** (क्षत्रिय): One of the four fundamental colours (Varnas) in Hindu tradition, consisting of the warriors, soldiers and rulers of society.

**Kshatradharma** (क्षात्रधर्म): This is a form of spiritual practice that involves "Protection of the seekers and destruction of the evildoers". In other words, it is the duty of fighting against evil as told by lord Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita.

**Kubera** (कुबेर): One of the gods of wealth and riches.

**Kuchasthala** (कुचस्थल): A city where Krishna stayed the night on his way to the court of Dhritarashtra.

**Kumāra** (कुमार): Son of Shiva and Parvati who conquered and slew the demon Taraka.

**Kumbha** (कुम्भ): Kumbha was a rakshasa who led a host against the monkeys when Hanumana fetches healing herb.

**Kumbhakarna** (कुम्भकर्ण): Brother of Ravana, King of Lanka, who was asleep most of the time because of the curse of Brahma.

**Kundalpur** (कुण्डलपुर): Capital of Raja Bhishmak who was father of Rukmini, the wife of Krishna.

**Kundinapura** (कुण्डिनपुर): Capital of Vidarbha.

**Kuntī** (कुंती): Mother of Pandavas, Daughter of Sura also known as Pritha. She was given in adoption to the king's childless cousin Kuntibhoja and was named Kunti after her adoptive father.

**Kunti-Madri** (कुंती-माद्री): Queens of King Pandu who gave birth to three and two sons known as the Pandavas in the forest where he spent many years for having committed some sin. The sons were known as Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva.

**Kurma** (कुर्म): Tortoise, The second Avatar of Vishnu where he took the form of a tortoise.

**Kurujangala** (कुरुजाङ्गल): An ancient kingdom of India, in the north near the Yamuna and Ganges rivers. The main cities of the region are Hastinapura and Indraprastha. Its kings are sometimes called the Kurus. On a modern map of India, this kingdom roughly forms most of the Haryana state. Indraprastha (now known as Delhi the capital of India) was its capital.

**Kurukshetra** (कुरुक्षेत्र): Plain of, scene of great battle between the Pandavas and Kurus for the throne of Hastinapura resulted in a battle in which a number of ancient kingdoms participated as allies of the rival clans. The location of the battle was Kurukshetra in the modern state of Haryana in India.

**Kurus** (कुरु): The name of an Indo-Aryan tribe and their kingdom in the Vedic civilization of India. Their kingdom was located in the area of modern Haryana. Bhishma was their guardian.

**Kusha** (कुश): Kusha and his twin brother Lava are the children of the Hindu God Rama and his wife Sita, whose story is told in the Ramayana

**Kusasthala** (कुसस्थल): one of the provinces asked by Pandavas,

## L

**Lakshagrah** (लाक्षागृह): The house of lac, The palace made out of lac at Benares where Pandavas along with Kunti were kept with a sense of banishment. The house was made with flammable materials which Purochana was to ignite at the opportune moment with the Pandavas entrapped inside. However, Vidura had seen through Duryodhana's plan and sent a miner to tunnel a shaft which the Pandavas used to escape.

**Lakshmana** (लक्ष्मण): Younger stepbrother of Rama and son of Sumitra and King Dasharatha. Duryodhana's gallant young son also bore this name.

**Lakshmi** (लक्ष्मी): Goddess of prosperity, wealth and good fortune. She is the consort of Vishnu and an aspect of Devi.

**Lakshmīndara** (लक्ष्मीन्दर): Son of Chand Sadagar who weds Behula. He was slain by Kal-nagini but restored to life by Mansa.

**Lankā** (लंका): An island city, generally identified with Ceylon, the home of Ravana.

**Lava** (लव): Kusa and Lava were sons of Rama and Sita.

**Lomasa** (लोमस): A brahmana sage who advised the Pandavas to reduce their retinue while repairing to the forest. Those unable to bear the hardships of exile were free to go to the court of Dhritarashtra or Drupada, king of Panchala. He accompanied Yudhishtira on his wanderings.

**Lopamudra** (लोपमुद्रा): Daughter of the king of Vidarbha who married the sage Agastya.

**Lord Narayana** (नारायण): Refuge of men; Mahavishnu.

## M

**Mādhava** (माधव): One of the names of Krishna. It means the Lord of Lakshmi.

**Madhu** (मधु): The name of Kingdom of Shtrughna.

**Madhusudana** (मधुसुदन): Another name of Krishna, the slayer of the asura Madhu.

**Mahābhārata** (महाभारत): One of the two major ancient Sanskrit epics of India, the other being the Ramayana. The Mahabharata is of religious and philosophical importance in India; in particular, the Bhagavad Gita, which is one of its chapters (Bhishmaparva) and a sacred text of Hinduism.

**Mahādeva** (महादेव): Another name of Shiva.

**Mahāpārshwa** (महापार्श्व): One of Ravana's generals.

**Mahārāksha** (महाराक्ष): Son of Khara slain at Lanka.

**Mahāvishnu** (महाविष्णु): Lord of the Universe who took human birth in order to wrest his kingdom from Emperor Bali for the salvation of the world. Lord Vishnu also took birth as Rama, son of Dasharatha, to kill Ravana, King of Lanka.

**Mahendra** (महेन्द्र): A King who had attained heaven. Also the name of a mountain upon which Hanumana rushes while searchin Sita, shaking it in wrath and frightening every beast that lived in its woods and caves.

**Mainaka** (मैनक): Another mountain, well wooded and full of fruits and roots, Hanumana coursed through the air while searchin Sita.

**Maitreya** (मैत्रेय): A sage who visited the court of Dhritarashtra, expressed sorrow at the Pandava's plight, advised Duryodhana not to injure the Pandavas for his own good.

**Makandi** : One of the provinces asked by Pandavas, A province running along the banks of the Ganges, to the south of Hastinapura. Kampilya the capital city of Panchala was situated in the Makandi province within the southern Panchala kingdom (1,140).

**Makara Sankranti** (मकर संक्रान्ति): A huge Religious festival regarding Sun. Lit. Makara means Capricorn and Sankranti is transition. It is about transition of Sun into Capricorn on its celestial path.

**Mālinī** (मालिनी): Malini was the name of river that was flowing in the forest where the ashrama of Kanva rishi was situated and Dushyanta fell in love with Shakuntala.

**Manasā Devī** (मन्सादेवी): Manasa Devi the goddess of snakes; the daughter of Shiva by a beautiful mortal woman. She was no favourite of her step mother, Bhagavati, or Parvati, Shiva's wife.

**Manasaputra** (मानसपुत्र): Literally "sons of mind". Wise men, created from the brain of Brahma. They are listed as Atri, Bharadwaja, Gotama, Jamadagni, Kashyapa, Vashishtha and Vishwamitra. Some sources add more names to this list.

**Mānasarovar** (मानसरोवर): A sacred lake in the Himalayas

**Mandara** (मंदर): The mountain used as a churning stick in Samudra manthan for churning the ocean using Vasuki nāga as rope by gods on one side and asuras on other side.

**Mandavya** (मंदव्य): A sage wrongly punished by the king by being impaled as the chief of robbers who had clandestinely hidden their stolen goods in a corner of his hermitage when he was in deep contemplation. Lord Dharma gave him this punishment for having tortured birds and bees in his childhood. At this

Mandavya cursed Dharma who was born as Vidura, the wise, to the servant maid of Ambalika, wife of King Vichitravirya, who offered her to Sage Vyasa in place of Ambalika.

**Mandhatri:** Mandhatri was a king, son of Yuvanaswa, of the race of Ikshvaku, and author of a hymn in the Rigveda.

**Mandodarī (मंदोदरी):** Mandodari was the daughter of the King of Danavas, Mayasura and celestial dancer, Hema. She was the first wife of the Lord of Lanka Ravana.

**Manipura chakraManipura:** 'City of jewels' in Sanskrit. Manipura is the third primary chakra according to Hindu tradition. It is positioned at the navel region and it has ten petals which match the vrittis of spiritual ignorance, thirst, jealousy, treachery, shame, fear, disgust, delusion, foolishness and sadness.

**Mantharā (मन्थरा):** Mantharā was a servant who convinced Kaikeyi that the throne of Ayodhya belonged to her son Bharata and that Rama should be exiled from the kingdom.

**Mantra (मंत्र):** An incantation with words of power. A religious syllable or poem, typically from the Sanskrit language. They are primarily used as spiritual conduits, words and vibrations that instill one-pointed concentration in the devotee. Other purposes have included religious ceremonies to accumulate wealth, avoid danger, or eliminate enemies. Mantras are performed through chanting.

**Manu Smriti (मनुस्मृति):** The Manusmriti translated Laws of Manu is regarded as an important work of Hindu law and ancient Indian society. Manu was the forefather of all humans and author of Manu Smriti. Certain historians believe it to have been written down around 200 C.E. under the reign of Pushymitra Shunga of Sangha clan.

**Mārīcha (मारीच):** A character in the Ramayana, uncle of Ravana who transformed himself into a golden deer at the behest of Ravana to entice Sita.

**Mārkaṇḍeya (मार्कण्डेय):** A sage who told Yudhishtira the story of a brahmana, Kausika.

**Marutta (मरुत्त):** A king of the Ikshwaku dynasty whose sacrifice was performed by Samvarta in defiance of Indra and Brihaspati.

**Mātali (मातली):** Charioteer of Indra who took Arjuna to the kingdom of gods.

**Matanga** (मत्तंग): A rishi during Ramayana period, Rama and Laxman pass by while searching Sita on way to mountain Rishyamūk on which dwelt Sugriva.

**Mathurā** (मथुरा): The capital of Yadavas which was invaded by Kams

**Matrikas**: A group of mother goddesses.

**Matsya** (मत्स्य): The first Avatar of Vishnu, where he came in the form of a fish

**Māyā** (माया): Maya is the limited, purely physical and mental reality in which our everyday consciousness has become entangled. Maya is believed to be an illusion, a veiling of the true, unitary Self—the Cosmic Spirit also known as Brahman. Maya originated in the Hindu scriptures known as the Upanishads.

**Mayasura** (मयासुर): Maya (मय), or Mayasura was a great ancient king of the Asura, Daitya and Rakshasa races upon earth. He was also the chief architect of the peoples of the netherworlds.

**Medhavi** (मेधवी): Son of Sage Baladhi who desired that his son should live as long as a certain mountain lasted. Filled with conceit, Medhavi angered Dhanushaksha who killed him by taking on the form of a bull and butting the mountain until it was broken to pieces.[1]

**Menakā** (मेनका): Menakā is considered one of the most beautiful of the heavenly Apsaras. She was sent by Indra, the king of the Devas, to break the severe penance undertaken by Vishwamitra.

**Meru** (मेरु): An ancient mountain and mythical centre of the universe on which was situated the city of Brahma. Becoming jealous of Meru, the Vindya began to grow very high obstructing the sun, the moon and the planets. Agastya whom the Vindhya mountain respected asked it to stop growing until he crossed it on his way to the south and returned to the north again. But he did not return at all, having settled in the south.

**Mithilā** (मिथिला): Mithilā was a kingdom in ancient India. It existed in the eastern Gangetic plains in areas which is today spread over Uttar Pradesh and Bihar states of India, and parts of Nepal. Raja Janaka, father of Sita, was king of this kingdom.

**Mitra** (मित्र): One of the Adityas.

**Moksha** (मोक्ष): Refers to liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth. In higher Hindu philosophy, it is seen as a transcendence of phenomenal being, of any sense of consciousness of time, space, and causation (karma).

**Muchukunda** (मुचुकुन्द): Muchukunda was a great sage who kills Kalayavan, the great Yavana warrior king in the Indian epic Mahabharata.

**Mukāsura** (मुकासुर): Mukāsura was a demon, friend of Kauravas, who was sent to disturb the austerities, Arjuna was performing at Mount Kailash. Mukāsura went to forest where Arjuna was practicing his vows of prayer, vigil, and fast and attacked Arjuna in the form of a boar to kill. At the same time Shiva came in the form of a huntsman and saved him. Shiva gave Arjuna the Gandiva, the divine bow, and blessed him.

## N

**Nachiketa** (नचिकेता): Nachiketa was son of a cowherd of the name Vājashrava, who was offered to Yama to find a place in Heaven by his father. Nachiketatas with his wits learnt the wisdom taught by death, found the Brahman and was freed from death.

**Nāga** (नाग): Nāga is the Sanskrit and Pāli word for a minor deity taking the form of a very large snake, found in Hindu and Buddhist mythology. The use of the term nāga is often ambiguous, as the word may also refer, in similar contexts, to one of several human tribes known as or nicknamed "Nāgas"; to elephants; and to ordinary snakes, particularly the King Cobra and the Indian Cobra, the latter of which is still called nāg (नाग) in Hindi and other languages of India.

**Nāgas** (नाग): Nāgas were a group who spread throughout India during the period of the epic Mahabharata. The demi-god tribe called Suparnas (in which Garuda belonged) were arch-rivals of the Nagas. The well known Nagas are Ananta, Vasuki, Takshaka, Karkotaka and Airavata.

**Nāga panchami** (नाग पंचमी): The festival of Nāga panchami is celebrated in Hindus to pay respect to Nāgas. The five Nāgas worshipped on Nāga panchami are Ananta, Vāsuki, Taxak, Karkotaka and Pingala.

**Nagavanshi** (नाग वंशी): Nagavanshi dynasty is one of the Kshatriya dynasties of India. It includes a number of Jats and Rajput clans. The worshippers of Nāga

(serpent) were known as Nāgā or Nāgil. The descendants of Nagas were called Nagavanshi.

**Nahusha** (नहुष): A mighty king who was made king of the gods because Indra had disappeared due to his killing Vritra through sin and deceit.

**Naimiṣāranya** (नैमिषारण्य): Naimiṣāranya (Naimisha Forest) was an ancient forest mentioned in the epic Mahabharata. It lay on the banks of the Gomati River (in Uttar Pradesh). The whole narration of Mahabharata took place at Naimisha forests, during a conclave of sages headed by sage Saunaka.

**Naivedhya** (नैवेद्य): Food or eatables prepared as offerings to God, prior to the oblation. (See also: Prasad)

**Nakula** (नकुल): Fourth brother of the Pandavas.

**Nala** (नल): King of Nishadha who lost his kingdom in a game of dice and deserted his wife Damayanti because of a curse.

**Nanda** (नंद): Nanda is head of a tribe of cowherds referred as Holy Gwals and foster-father of Krishna, who was allegedly given to him by Vasudeva. Nanda was married to Yasoda. Krishna derives his name Nandalal (meaning son of Nanda) from him.

**Nandi** (नंदि): Nandi is the white bull which Shiva rides, and the leader of the Ganas. The white colour of the bull symbolizes purity and justice.

**Nandinī** (नन्दिनी): Vasishtha's divinely beautiful cow, child of Kamadhenu.

**Narasimha** (नरसिंह): The fourth Avatar of Vishnu. He is a mixed form of a man and a lion.

**Nara** (नर): Arjuna or Dhananjaya.

**Nārada** (नारद): Narada is the Hindu divine sage, who is an enduring chanter of the names Hari and Narayana which other names for Vishnu, considered to be the supreme God by Vaishnavites and many other Hindus. He is regarded the Manasputra of Brahma as he was born of his thoughts. He is regarded as the Triloka sanchari, the ultimate nomad, who roams the three lokas of Swargaloka, Mrityuloka and Patalloka to find out about the life and welfare of people.



**Nārāyaṇa** (नारायण): Nārāyaṇa is an important Sanskrit name for Vishnu. The name is also associated with Brahma and Krishna. He is also identified with, or as the son of, the original man, Purusha.

**Nārāyaṇa s** (नारायण): Krishna's kinsmen.

**Nārāyaṇāśrama** (नारायणाश्रम): A charming forest where the Pandavas had halted during their wanderings.

**Nārāyaṇastra** ( नारायणास्त्र ): Narayanastra is the personal missile weapon of Vishnu in his Narayana form, this astra lets loose a powerful tirade of millions of deadly missiles simultaneously.

**Narishyanta** (नरिष्यन्त): Narishyanta was son of Vaivasvata Manu and belongs to solar race of Kshatriyas.

**Narmadā** (नर्मदा): The Nerbudda river, one of the most important sacred rivers, originating from Amarkantak is believed to have descended from the sky by the order of Lord Shiva. The personified river is variously represented as being daughter of a Rishi named Mekala (from whom she is called Mekala and Mekala-kanya), as a daughter of the moon, as a 'mind-born daughter' of the Somapas, and as sister of the Nagas. It was she who brought Purukutsa to the aid of the Nagas against the Gandharvas, and the grateful snake-gods made her name a charm against the venom of snakes.

**Navadurga** (नवदुर्गा): Literally means nine Durgas, constitute, according to Hindu mythology, the manifestation of Durga in nine different forms.

**Navaratri** (नवरात्रि): A Hindu festival of worship and dance. The word Navaratri literally means nine nights in Sanskrit. During these nine nights and ten days, nine forms of Shakti/Devi are worshipped.

**Netā** (नेता): Netā was daughter of Shiva and friend of Manasa Devi.

**Nikumbha** (निकुम्भ): One of Ravana's generals who led the rakshasas against the host of monkeys and was slain.

**Nīla** (नील): Son of Agni; One of the monkey host placed at the gate guarded by Prahasta.

**Nirvāṇa** (निर्वाण): Literally "extinction" and/or "extinguishing", is the culmination of the yogi's pursuit of liberation. Hinduism uses the word nirvana to describe the state of moksha, roughly equivalent to heaven.

**Nishādha** (निषाध): A country where Indra, Lord of the gods had lived once disguised as a brahmana. King of the Nishadha was Guha who guarded Rama after he crossed Koshala kingdom on his exile.

**Nishādha** (निषाध): The Nishādha peoples were indigenous tribes inhabiting ancient India. The Indo-Aryan peoples of ancient India's Vedic civilization saw the Nishadhas as uncivilized and barbarian peoples. Nishadhas did not follow the Vedic religion, and were involved in a number of wars with Indo-Aryan kingdoms.

## O

**OmOm, or Aum** (ॐ): the most sacred syllable in Hinduism, first coming to light in the Vedic Tradition. The syllable is sometimes referred to as the "Udgitha" or "pranava mantra" (primordial mantra); not only because it is considered to be the primal sound, but also because most mantras begin with it.

## P

**Pāñchajanya** (पांचजन्य): Name of Krishna's conch.

**Palāsa** (पलास): A tree *Butea frondosa* also called "flame of the forest".

**Pāñchāla** (पांचाल): Pāñchāla corresponds to the geographical area between the Ganges River and Yamuna River around the city of Kanpur and Benares. Anciently, it was home to an Indian kingdom, the Panchalas, one of the Mahajanapadas.

**Pāñchālī** (पांचाली): Another name of Draupadi, Queen of the Pandavas and daughter of King Drupada.

**Pāñchālya** (पांचाल्य): A son of King Drupada who died in the war.

**Panchvatī** (पंचवटी): The place beside the river Godavari where Rama, Sita and Laxmana stayed in exile.

**Pāñḍavaḥ** (पाण्डव): Pandavas in Sanskrit pāñḍavaḥ are the five acknowledged sons of Pandu, by his two wives Kunti and Madri. They are Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna and Nakula, Sahadeva

**Pāñḍu** (पाण्डु): Second son of Vichitravirya and Ambalika who succeeded to the throne of Hastinapura on his father's death, as his elder brother Dhritarashtra was born blind, father of the Pandavas.

**Paramhansa** (परमहंस): The supreme swan

**Pārāsara** (पारासर): A great sage, father of Veda Vyasa.

**Parashurama** (परसुराम): Sixth avatara of Vishnu, the son of Jamadagni. His name literally means Rama-with-the-axe. He received an axe after undertaking a terrible penance to please Shiva, from whom he learned the methods of warfare and other skills. Parashurama's creation was a mistake as his mother was given a concoction made to produce a Kshatriya child. Parashurama was of mixed varna.

**Pārtha** (पार्थ): Another name of Arjuna.

**Parvasu** (परवसु): Son of Raibhva and elder brother of Arvvasu whose wife was violated by Yavakrida, who was killed with a spear by a fiend for his sin.

**Parikshit** (परिक्षित): Son of Abhimanyu and grandson of the Pandavas who was crowned king after the holocaust claimed the Kauravas and the Pandavas.

**Parṇada** (पर्णादि): The name of a brahman who brought news of Nala to Damayanti.

**Pārvatī** (पार्वती): Goddess of love, the consort of Shiva and mother of Ganesha, Rukmini prayed to her for saving her from the cruel Shishupala king of Chedi, as she had set her heart on marrying Krishna.

**Pāsupatāstra** (पाशुपतास्त्र): Pāsupatāstra is the irresistible and most destructive personal weapon of Shiva discharged by the mind, eyes, words or a bow.

**Paurava** (पौरव): A Kaurava hero.

**Pavanrekha** (पवनरेखा): Wife of Ugrasena, mother of Kams.

**Phalguna** (फल्गुन): Arjuna.

**Pitāmaha** (पितामह): Literally grandfather, which however carried no imputation of senile infirmity but denotes the status of the pater familias.

**Prabhasa** (प्रभास): The Vasu who seized Vasishtha's divine cow.

**Pradyumna** (प्रद्युम्न): Son of Krishna and Rukmiṇī.

**Prahasta** (प्रहस्त): Means long-head, One of Ravana's generals.

**Prajāpatī** (प्रजापति): Prajāpatīs are a group (or one) of creation gods, children of Brahma, including Daksha.

**Pramanakoti** (प्रमाणकोटि): A beautiful spot on the banks of the Ganges, to the north of Hastinapura, the Kuru capital (1,128). Duryodhana built a palace here for disporting himself in the waters of Ganges. A huge banyan tree was the mark of that place (3,12). Here he poisoned the food of Bhima, bound him and threw him into Ganges. Bhima was rescued by the Naga tribes living in the vicinity (1,128) (8,83) (9,56).

**Prasad** (प्रसाद): Food or other offerings, considered to be sanctified, after being presented to God. (See also: Naivedhya)

**Pratikhāmi** (प्रतिखामी): Duryodhana's charioteer.

**Prayāg** (प्रयाग): The holy place at Allahabad where Ganges and Yamuna meet.

**Prithā** (प्रिथा): Mother of Karna and of the Pandavas; equivalent Kunti.

**Puṇḍarikaksha** (पुण्डरिक्ष): Krishna, the lotus-eyed one.

**Purāṇa** (पुराण): Purana meaning "ancient" or "old" is the name of a genre (or a group of related genres) of Indian written literature (as distinct from oral literature). Its general themes are history, tradition and religion. It is usually written in the form of stories related by one person to another.

**Purochana** (पुरोचन): An architect and friend of Duryodhana, who built a beautiful wax palace named "Sivam" in Varanavata. Kunti prepared a lavish feast which left him intoxicated and led to his death as the wax palace burnt down.[1]

**Purumitra** (पुरुमित्र): A Kaurava warrior

**Purushārtha** (पुरुषार्थ): The four chief aims of human life. Arranged from lowest to highest, these goals are: sensual pleasures (kama), worldly status and security (artha), personal righteousness and social morality (dharma), and liberation from the cycle of reincarnation (moksha).

**Purushottama** (पुरुषोत्तम): An epithet of Sri Krishna. It is one of the names of Vishnu and means the Supreme Being.

**Pushkara**: The brother of Nala to whom nala lost his kingdom and all that he possessed in gambling.

## Q

**Quest:** Hindu philosophy does not take a restrictive view on the fundamental question of God and the creation of the universe. Instead it lets the individual seek and discover answers in the quest of life. Seeking to know: 'Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?'

## R

**Rādhā** (राधा): Rādhā is one of the gopis (cow-herding girls) of the forest of Vrindavan, Krishna plays with her during his upbringing as a young boy; The other Radha is the wife of the charioteer Adhiratha, who found an abandoned new-born boy, whom he named Karna.

**Rāhu** (राहु): Rahu is a snake that swallows the sun or the moon causing eclipses. Rahu is one of the navagrahas.

**Raibhya** (रैभ्य): A sage whose hermitage was situated on the banks of the Ganges, near Rishikesh, a place, which gets its name, from Lord Vishnu appearing to him as Hrishikesh. The Pandavas during their wanderings visited it. This ghat was very holy. Bharata, son of Dasharatha bathed here. Indra was cleansed of his sin of killing Vritra unfairly by bathing in this ghat. Sanatkumar became one with God. Aditi, mother of the gods, prayed here to be blessed with a son.

**Radheya** (राधेय): Son of Radha, a name of Karna, who as a foundling was brought up as a son by Radha, the wife of the Charioteer Adhiratha.

**Rajasūya** (राजसूय): A sacrifice performed by a king to be entitled to assume the title of "Emperor".

**Rākṣasaḥ** (राक्षस): A rakshasa alternately, raksasa or rakshas is a demon or unrighteous spirit in Hinduism.

**Rāma** (राम): The Seventh Avatara of Vishnu. The life and heroic deeds of Rama are written in the Sanskrit epic, The Ramayana.

**Ramanaka dwīpa** (रमणक द्वीप): The home of Kaliya Naga, a poisonous hydra, on the banks of Yamuna river.

**Rāmāyaṇa** (रामायण): Part of the Hindu smṛiti, written by Valmiki. This epic of 24,000 verses in seven kandas (chapters or books) tells of a Raghuvamsa prince, Rama of Ayodhya, whose wife Sita is abducted by the rakshasa Ravana.

**Rāma-navamī** (राम नवमी): A Hindu festival, celebrating of the birth of Lord Rama. The day falls on the Navami, ninth day of the Chaitra month of Hindu lunar year in 'Shukla paksha'.

**Rambhā** (रम्भा): An apsara in the court of Indra.

**Ratī** (रती): Ratī is the goddess of passion and lust, and a daughter of Daksha. She married Kamadeva, the God of love.

**Rāvaṇa** (रावण): King of Lanka who abducted Sita, the beautiful wife of Ramachandra. Ravana is depicted in art with up to ten heads, signifying that he had knowledge spanning all the ten directions.

**Rewatī** (रेवती): Daughter of Raja Rewat of Arntā who marries Balarama

**Ṛgveda** (ऋग्वेद): The Rigveda is a collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns counted as the holiest of the four religious texts of Hindus, known as the Vedas.

**Rishabha** (ऋषभ): Rshabha, the bull, a Hindu god mentioned in epic and Puranic literature, is an unusual avatar of Vishnu. The second note of the Indian gamut (Shadja, rishabha, gandhara, madhyama, panchama, daivata, nishada -sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni.)

**Ṛta** (ऋतं): Vedic principle of natural order believed to regulate and coordinate the operation of the universe on the natural, moral and sacrificial levels.

**Ṛṣi** (ऋषि): Rishi, also known as Mantradrāṣṭa ("seer of the Mantras") and Vedavaktāra ("chanter of the Vedas") is a seer who "heard" (cf. śruti) the hymns of the Vedas. A rishi is regarded as a combination of a patriarch, a priest, a preceptor, an author of Vedic hymns, a sage, a saint, an ascetic, a prophet and a hermit into a single person.

**Rishyamūk** (ऋष्यमूक): Mountain on which Sugriva dwelt.

**Rishyasringa** (ऋष्यशृंग): Son of sage Vibhandaka, who had grown up seeing no mortal except his father. The king of Anga, which was afflicted with a dire famine, to bring rain and plenty, invited him.

**Rituparṇa** (ऋतुपर्ण): The king of Ayodhya to whom Nala became the charioteer.

**Rohiṇi** (रोहिणि): The wife of Vasudeva and mother of Balarama

**Romapada** (रोमपद): King of Anga which was once visited by a great drought.

**Rudra** (रुद्र): A Rigvedic god of the storm, the hunt, death, Nature and the Wind. Rudra is an early form of Shiva and a name of Shiva in the Shiva sahasranama.

**Rudra nritya** (रुद्र नृत्य): Shiva's cosmic dance of destruction.

**Rukma** (रुक्म): Elder brother of Rukmiṇī, Heir apparent to the throne of Vidarbha. When defeated by Balarama and Krishna he established a new city Bhojakata, ashamed to return to Kundinapura, the capital of Vidarbha, and ruled over it.

**Rukmiṇī** (रुक्मिणी): Daughter of Raja Bhishmak, born at Kundalpur. Rukmini was the first wife and queen of Krishna, the 8th avatar of Vishnu. She was an avatar of Lakshmi.

**Ruparekha** (रूपरेखा): Lit. meaning a streak of Beauty. A statue in the throne of Vikramaditya.

**Raghu**- A boy who lives on a street

## S

**Shachī** (शची): Wife of Indra, king of the gods on whom Nahusha's evil eye fell. Through the help of Brihaspati, she caused Nahusha's downfall and restored Indra as the leader of the Devas.[1] She was also known as Indrani.

**Sadhana** (साधना): Spiritual exercise by a Sadhu or a Sadhaka to attain moksha, which is liberation from the cycle of birth and death (Samsara), or a particular goal such as blessing from a deity.

**Sagara** (सगर): King Sagar is one of the greatest kings of Suryavansha in the Satya Yuga. He was king of Ayodhya, ancestor to King Dasharatha. He had two wives Keshini and Sumati. Asamanja was his son from Keshini.

**Sahadéva** (सहदेव): Youngest of the Pandava princes who offered the first honors to Krishna at the Rajasuya sacrifices.

**Saibya** (सैब्य): A ruler friendly to the Pandavas.

**Sairandhri** (सैरंध्री): A maid servant or female attendant employed in royal female apartments.

**Saindhava** (सैधव): Jayadratha.

**Śakra** (सक्र): Śakra is identified with the Vedic deity Indra. Śakra is sometimes named as one of the twelve Ādityas.

**Shakuni** (शकुनि): Shakuni was the brother of Gandhari. He was very fond of his nephew Duryodhana. He won the Pandavas' half of the kingdom for his nephew, as a wager in a rigged game of dice.

**Salva** (सल्व): Friend of Shishupala, who besieged Dwaraka Sri Krishna's kingdom to avenge Shishupala's death at the latter's hand.

**Shalya** (शल्य): Ruler of Madradesa and brother of Madri and uncle of the Pandavas who because of having received hospitality from Duryodhana went over to his side.

**Samādhi** (समाधि): A term used in yogic meditation. Samadhi is also the Hindi word for a structure commemorating the dead.

**Samba** : Sambu was son of Krishna, who married Lakshmana, daughter of Duryodhana.

**Sāmkhya** (सांख्य): A school of philosophy emphasising a dualism between Purusha and Prakrti, propounded by sage Kapila.

**Sampāti** (सम्पाति): Sampati was one of the two sons of Aruna, elder brother of Jatayu. Sampati lost his wings when he was a child.

**Samsaptaka** (संसप्तक): One who has taken a vow to conquer or die, and never to retreat. The Samsaptakas were suicide-squads, vowed to some desperate deed of daring.

**Samsara** (संसार): Means wandering, The tree worlds constitute Samsara. Refers to the concept of reincarnation or rebirth in Indian philosophical traditions.

**Samvarta** (संवर्त): Brihaspati's younger brother, a person of great learning.

**Samba** (संब): A Yadava youngster dressed as a woman who gave birth to a mace, as foretold by rishis.

**Samudra manthan** (समुद्र मन्थन): Samudra manthan or The churning of the ocean of milk is one of the most famous episodes in the Puranas and is celebrated in a major way every twelve years in the festival known as Kumbha Mela.



**Sanga** (संग): Son of Virata. When king Virata was wounded, he had to get into Sanga's chariot, having lost his chariot, horses and charioteer

**Sanjaya** (संजय): The narrator who tells blind Dhritarashtra the progress of the war from day to day. He told the king that a victim of adverse fate would first become perverted and loses his sense of right and wrong. Time would destroy his reason and drive him to his own destruction.

**Sanjivani** (संजीवनी): Sanjeevani is a magical herb mentioned in the Ramayana when, Lakshmana is badly wounded and is nearly killed by Ravana. Hanuman was called upon to fetch this herb from the mount Dronagiri a.k.a. Mahodaya in the Himalayas. Sushena took the life-giving plant and made Lakshman to smell its savour, so that he rose up whole and well.

**Sankula Yuddha** (संकुल युद्ध): A melee, confused fight, a soldiers battle as distinguished from the combats of heroes.

**Santā** (संता): Daughter of Dasharatha, Wife of sage Rishyasringa.

**Sāntanu** (सांतनु): King of Hastinapura, father of Bhishma.

**Sanyāsin** (सन्यासिन): One who has renounced the world and its concerns.

**Saran** (सारण): The spy of Ravana, Mentioned in Ramayana Yuddha Kanda/Sarga 26, who tells Ravana about strength of the army of vanaras.

**Sarasana** (सरसन): One of the Kaurava brothers who died in the war.

**Sharmishtha** (सरमिष्ठा): Princess and daughter of asura king Vrishaparva, wife of Yayati, who got angry with Devayani and slapped and pushed her into a dry well. Sarmishtha gave birth to Druhyu, Anu, and Puru.

**Saraswati** (सरस्वती): Saraswati is the first of the three great goddesses of Hinduism, the other two being Lakshmi and Durga. Saraswati is the consort of Lord Brahmā, the Creator.

**Sarayū** (सरयू): Sarayu was an ancient Indian river, sometimes thought of at probably today's Ghaghara river, and sometimes as a tributary. The river where Lakshmana practices austerities.

**Satanika** (सतनिक): Virata's son whose head was severed by Drona.

**Satī** (सती): One of name of Dākshāyani, Dākshāyani is the consort of Shiva. Other names for Dākshāyani include Gaurī, Umā, Aparnā, Lalithā, Sivakāmini

etc. Sati is also the term for the immolation of a widow on her husband's pyre in Hinduism.

**Satyajit** (सत्यजित): A Panchala prince, a hero who stood by Yudhishtira to prevent his being taken prisoner by Drona, while Arjuna was away answering a challenge by the Samsaptakas (the Trigartas).

**Satyaki** (सत्यकि): A Yadava warrior, friend of Krishna and the Pandavas who advocated collecting their forces and defeating the unrighteous Duryodhana.

**Satya Nārāyana** (सत्य नारायण): Vishnu, Embodiment as Krishna.

**Satyavān** (सत्यवान): Meaning the truth-speaker, husband of Savitri. The oldest known version of the story of Savitri and Satyavan is found in "The Book of the Forest" of the Mahabharata.

**Satyavati** (सत्यवती): A fisherman's daughter who possessed uncommon beauty and emanated a divinely sweet fragrance and king Santanu became enamored of her, married her and made her his queen. The wife of Bhishma's father, Shantanu.

**Satyavrata** (सत्यव्रत): Warrior on the Kaurava side.

**Saugandhika** (सौगंधिका): A plant that produced a very beautiful and fragrant flower that Bhima went to get for Draupadi.

**Savitri** (सावित्री): Wife of Satyavan.

**Savyasachi** (सव्यसाचि): Ambidexter, one who can use both hands with equal facility and effect. A name of Arjuna who could use his bow with the same skill with either hands.

**Shakti** (शक्ति): An aspect of Devi and a personification of God as the Divine Mother who represents the active, dynamic principles of feminine power.

**Shaktism** (शाक्त): Lit., "doctrine of power" or "doctrine of the Goddess" is a denomination of Hinduism that focuses worship upon Shakti or Devi – the Hindu Divine Mother – as the absolute, ultimate Godhead. It is, along with Shaivism and Vaisnavism, one of the three primary schools of Hinduism.

**Shakuntalā** (शकुन्तला): Shakuntala was mother of Emperor Bharata and the wife of Dushyanta. Shakuntala was born of Vishvamitra and Menaka.

**Shālwa** (शाल्व): The King with whom Ambā was secretly in love.

**Shankara** (शंकर): A name of Shiva; A great magician, friend of Chand Sagar.

**Śankha** (शंख): Shankha is the divine Cough or sea shell, which is one of the insignia in the Hindu God Vishnu's hands. The sound emitted from Shankha when blown, is too divine, that is used for regular rituals for Vishnu. Śankha was also the name of one of sons of King Virata who was killed in Mahabharata.

**Shantanu** (शान्तनु): Shantanu was a king of Hastinapura, father of Bhishma. Shantanu weds Satyawati, a ferryman's daughter.

**Shatrughna** (शत्रुघ्न): One of Dasharatha's four sons, King of Madhu.

**Śatapatha brāhmaṇa** (शतपथ ब्राह्मण): Shatapatha Brahmana ("Brahmana of one-hundred paths"), abbreviated ŚB) is one of the prose texts describing the Vedic ritual, associated with the White Yajurveda.

**Shaivism** (शैव धर्म): Shaivism names the oldest of the four sects of Hinduism. Followers of Shaivism, called "Shaivas", and also "Saivas" or "Saivites", revere Shiva as the Supreme Being.

**Śeṣa** (शेष): Shesha is a naga that takes human birth through Devaki, one of the primal beings of creation. Equivalent-Ananta or Atī-sheshan. In the Puranas, Shesha is said to hold all the planets of the universe on his hoods and to constantly sing the glories of Vishnu from all his mouths.

**Shiva** (शिव): A form of Ishvara or God in Shaivism. Śiva is commonly known as "the destroyer" and is the third god of the Trimurti.

**Shikhandi** (शिखण्डी): Daughter-son of Drupada, A girl turned man, warrior on the Pandava side. He had been born in an earlier lifetime as a woman named Amba, who was rejected by Bhishma for marriage.

**Shishupāla** (शिषुपाल): Shishupala was son of Damaghosha, king of Chedi, by Srutadeva, sister of Vasudeva; he was therefore cousin of Krishna, but he was Krishna's implacable foe, because Krishna had carried off Rukmini, his intended wife. Shishupāla was Identical with Hiranyakashipu who was slain by Krishnaat the time of Dharmaputra's Rajasuya sacrifice.

**Shiva** (शिव): Shiva is a form of Ishvara or God in the later Vedic scriptures of Hinduism. Shiva is the supreme God in Shaivism, one of the major branches of Hinduism practiced in India.

**Shivi** (शिवि): Shivi was a great, powerful and generous king. Indra and Agni once tested his generosity by becoming birds when the king gave flesh from his body to fulfil his duty.

**Shri** (श्री): Another name of Lakshmi, a goddess, the delight of Vishnu.

**Shri Krishna** (श्री कृष्ण): See Krishna.

**Shrutkīrti** (श्रुतकीर्ति): Daughter of Kushadhwaaja; bestowed on Shatrughna.

**Shudra** (शुद्र): One of the four castes in Hindu tradition, consisting of artisans, cleaners and labourers.

**Shukracharya** (शुक्राचार्य): Shukracharya was a guru in Hindu mythology. Known as the guru of the Asuras, he is also associated with the planet Shukra (Venus) which is named after him. He was born as the son of Rishi Brighu and his wife Ushana.

**Siddhāshrama** (सिद्धाश्रम): The Shiva's hermitage, Where Rama and Vishvamitra sacrifice for many days.

**Simhanada** (सिंहनाद): A lion-note or roar; a deep roar of defiance or triumph which warriors were wont to utter to inspire confidence in their friends, of terror in their enemies.

**Sindhu** (सिन्धु): The Indus River, Urdu سندھ دریا; Tibetan: Sengge Chu ('Lion River'); Persian: Hindu; Greek: Sinthos; Pashto: Abaseen ("The Father of Rivers"); Mehran (an older name)) is the longest and most important river in Pakistan. Originating in the Tibetan plateau in the vicinity of Lake Mansarovar.

**Sinhikha** (सिंहिख): The grim rakshasa who rose from the sea and caught Hanumana, when he coursed through the air like Garuda in search of Sita.

**Sini** (सिनि): One of the suitors to Devaki's hand. A kinsman of the Kauravas.

**Sītā** (सीता): Sita was the wife of Rama, and is esteemed an exemplar of womanly and wifely virtue. Sita was herself an avatāra of Lakshmi, Vishnu's eternal consort, who chose to reincarnate herself on Earth as Sita, and endure an arduous life, in order to provide humankind an example of such virtues.

**Sloka** (श्लोक): A verse of lines in Sanskrit, typically recited as a prayer.

**Smarta** (स्मर्त): A Hindu denomination, which follows Advaita philosophy and considers that all gods are manifestations of Ishvar.

**Śruti** (श्रुति): A canon of Hindu scriptures. Shrutis are believed to have no author; rather a divine recording of the "cosmic sounds of truth", heard by rishis.

**Soma** (सोम): A ritual drink of importance among Hindus. It is frequently mentioned in the Rigveda, which contains many hymns praising its energizing or intoxicating qualities.

**Somadutta** (सोमदत्त): One of the suitors to Devaki's hand. A kinsman of the Kauravas.

**Sthūṇa** (स्थूण): A Yaksha, follower of Kubera, who exchanges his identity with Shikhandin, A rakshasa who helps disturb Vishvamitra's sacrifices.

**Subahu** (सुबाहु): King of Kulinda in the Himalayas, ally of the Kauravas, Subahu was a demon who tried to interrupt Viswamitra's yaga. He was slain by Lord Rama. King of Chedi.

**Subhadra** (सुभद्रा): Wife of Arjuna, sister of Sri Krishna and mother of Abhimanyu.

**Subrahmaniam** (सुब्रह्मण्यम): The southern mountain deity.

**Sudakshina** (सुदक्षिण): A warrior on the Kaurava side.

**Sudarsana** (सुदर्शन): A warrior on the Kaurava army.

**Sudarshana Chakra** (सुदर्शन चक्र): Sudarshan Chakra is a spinning disc like weapon with very sharp edge, which is one of the weapons in the Hindu God Vishnu's hands.

**Sudeshna** (सुदेषणा): Queen of King Virata whom Sairandhri (Draupadi) served.

**Sudeva** (सुदेव): A Brahman who traced Damayanti in Chedi and later helps Damayanti in her quest to find Nala. He was friend of Damayanti's brother.

**Sugrīva** (सुग्रीव): Monkey-king, friend of Sri Rama, and brother of mighty Vali whom Sri Rama killed.

**Sujata** (सुजाता): Daughter of Sage Uddalaka and wife of Kagola, his disciple who had virtue and devotion but not much of erudition, mother of Ashtavakra.

**Śuka** (सुक): A sage, son of Vyasa, who related the Bhagavata Purana to King Parikshit, grandson of Arjuna.

**Sukanyā** (सुकन्या): Meaning - Fair-maid, The wife of Chyavana whom the Ashvins beheld at her bath, bare of any garment.

**Sumān** (सुमन): Son of Asamanja.

**Sumatī** (सुमती): Wife of Sagara.

**Sumitra** (सुमित्र): Abhimanyu's charioteer.

**Sumitrā** (सुमित्रा): One of Dasharatha's three wives; mother of Lakshmana and Shatrughna.

**Sunda** (सुन्द): Sunda and Upasunda were two brave and powerful asura princes who performed austerities to please Brahma, who bestowed them the boon that nobody else would slay them, other than each other. Later Brahma created a beautiful apsara Tilottama to create differences within and destroyed them mutually.

**Sunitī** (सुनिती): Mother of Dhruva.

**Supārshwa** (सुपार्शव): One of Ravana's counsellors.

**Surabhi** (सुरभि): The wish-bestowing cow that came first from the sea in the process of churning of the Ocean by gods and daityas.

**Surpankhā** (सुपर्णखा): A rākshasī; sister of Ravana; desires Rama; seeks to become Lakshmana's wife who attempts to slay Sita.

**Supratika** (सुप्रतिक): Name of King Bhagadatta's elephant.

**Sūrya** (सूर्य): A solar deity who is one of the three main Vedic Gods.

**Susarma** (सुसर्म): King of Trigarta, a supporter of the Kauravas who backed the proposal to invade Matsya, Virata's country.

**Sushena** (सुषेन): A monkey chief ; at siege of Lanka.

**Sushruta Samhita** (सुश्रुतसंहिता): Suśruta Samhitā is a Sanskrit redaction text on all of the major concepts of ayurvedic medicine with innovative chapters on surgery, attributed to Sushruta, likely a historical sage physician of the 6th century BCE.

**Sūtra** (सूत्र): Sūtra refers to an aphorism or a collection of such aphorisms in the form of a book or text. 'Sutras' form a school of Vedic study, related to and somewhat later than the Upanishads.

**Suvarna** (सुवर्ण): A soldier on the Kaurava side.

**Sri Rama** (श्रीराम): Also knew as Rama, Ramachandra or Sri Rama. Hanumana tells Bhima how he was deeply thrilled when he happened to touch Rama's body. This king of Ayodhya was banished to the forest for fourteen years, killed Ravana the king of Lanka who abducted his wife, Sita.

**Srinjayas** (श्रीन्जय): Pandava supporters.

**Srutayu** (श्रुतायु), **Astutayu** (अस्तुतायु): Two brothers fighting on the Kaurava side attacked Arjuna but were killed.

**Srutayudha** (श्रुतायुद्ध): A Kaurava warrior whose mace hurled at Krishna rebounded fiercely, killing Srutayudha himself. Her mother Parnasa had obtained that gift from Varuna who had specified that the mace should not be used against one who does not fight, else it would kill the person who hurls it.

**Swarga** (स्वर्ग): An Olympian paradise, a place where all wishes and desires are gratified, The heaven of Indra where mortals after death enjoy the results of their good deeds on earth.

**Sveta** (स्वेत): A son of King Virata who fell in battle to Bhishma's arrow.

**Swayamvara** (स्वयंवर): Meaning - Own-choice, Swayamvara, in ancient India, was a practice of choosing a life partner, among a list of suitors by a girl of marriageable age.

**Syala** (स्यल): A Yadava prince who insulted the sage Gargya, and was the cause of his becoming the father of Kalayavana, a great foe of Krishna and the Yadava family.

## T

**Tall** (टल्ल): One of Ravana's counsellors

**Tārā** (तारा): See Tara (Devi)

**Tāragam** (तारगम): Tāragam is the name of forest, where dwelt ten thousand heretical rishis, who taught that the universe is eternal, that souls have no lord and that performance of works alone suffices for the attainment of salvation. Shiva taught them lesson and they became his followers. This legend is associated with Shiva's dance.

**Tāraka** (तारक): A demon slain by Kumara, the first son of Shiva.

**Tandava** (ताण्डव): Shiva's cosmic dance.

**Tantra** (तंत्र): The esoteric Hindu traditions of rituals and yoga. Tantra can be summarised as a family of voluntary rituals modeled on those of the Vedas, together with their attendant texts and lineages.

**Tantripala**: Assumed name of Sahadeva at Virata's court.

**Tarpana or Tarpan** (तर्पण): Sacrament, a death rite, also performed during the Pitru Paksha.

**Tilottamā** (तिलोत्तमा): Tilottama was an Apsaras. She is reputed to have been created by Vishwakarma from Tila seeds. She was responsible for bringing out the mutual destruction of the Asuras Sunda and Upasunda.

**Tripura** (त्रिपुरा): Tripura (meaning three cities, in Sanskrit) was constructed by the great architect Mayasura. They were great cities of prosperity, power and dominance over the world, but due to their impious nature, Maya's cities were destroyed by Lord Shiva.

**Trishira** (त्रिसिर): Trishira that is, one having three heads, was an asura mentioned in the Ramayana. He was one of the seven sons of Ravana, and his other brothers were Indrajit, Prahasta, Atikaya, Akshayakumara, Devantaka and Narantaka.

**Tulsī Dās** (तुलसीदास): Goswami Tulsidas (1532–1623) was a Hindu poet and philosopher, translator of the epics into vernacular. Tulsidas wrote twelve books and is considered the greatest and most famous of Hindi poets.

## U

**Uchchaihshravas**: Uchchaihshravas was the white horse of Indra, produced at the churning of the ocean. It is fed on ambrosia, and is held to be the king of horses.

**Udayana**: Udayana was a prince of the Lunar race, and son of Sahasranika, who is the hero of a popular story. He was king of Vatsa, and is commonly called Vatsaraja. His capital was Kausambi. Also a name of Agastya.

**Uddalaka**: A great sage and the teacher of Vedanta.



**Uddhava:** The friend and counsellor of Krishna. According to some he was Krishna 's cousin, being son of Devabhaga, the brother of Vasudeva. He was also called Pavanayadhi.

**Ugrasena** (उग्रसेन): one-time King of Yadavas; deposed by his son Kams. His wife was Pavanrekha. Krishna killed Kams and established Ugrasena on throne.

**Ujjayini** (उज्जयिनि) or **Ujjain** (उज्जैन): is an ancient city of central India, in the Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh near which the ancient throne of Vikramaditya was discovered, one of the seven sacred cities of the Hindus, where the Kumbh Mela is held every twelve years. It is also home to Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga, one of the twelve Jyotirlinga shrines to the god Shiva.

**Ulūka** (उलूक): 'An owl.' Son of Kitava. He was king of a country and people of the same name. He was an ally of the Kauravas, and acted as their envoy to the Pandavas.

**Ulūpī** (उलूपी): A daughter of Kauravya, Raja of the Nagas, with whom Arjuna contracted a kind of marriage. She was nurse to her stepson, Babhruvahana, and had great influence over him. According to the Vishnu Purana she had a son named Iravat.

**Umadevī** (उमादेवी): Wife of Shiva.

**Unchhavritti** (उन्छवृत्ती): The life of a mendicant, begging his food.

**Upachitra** (उपचित्र): One of King Dhritarashtra's sons who perished in the war.

**Upanishad** (उपनिषद्): Part of the Hindu Śruti scriptures which primarily discuss meditation and philosophy, seen as religious instructions by most schools of Hinduism.

**Upaplavya** (उपप्लव्य): A place in Matsya Kingdom, where the Pandavas settled after their exile of thirteen years.

**Uparichara:** A Vasu or demigod, who, according to the Mahabharata, became king of Chedi by command of Indra. He had five sons by his wife; and by an Apsaras, named Adrika, condemned to live on earth in the form of a fish, he had a son named Matsya (fish), and a daughter, Satyavati, who was the mother of Vyasa.

**Upasunda** (उपसुन्द): Sund and Upasunda were two brave and powerful asura princes who performed austerities to please Brahma, who bestowed them the boon that nobody else would slay them, other than each other. Later Brahma created a beautiful apsara Tilottama to create differences within and destroyed them.

**Urmilā** (उर्मिला): Second daughter of Janaka; bestowed on Lakshmana.

**Urvasī** (उर्वसी): An apsara in Indra's court, whose amorous overtures Arjuna declined.

**Ushā** (उषा): Wife of Aniruddha, daughter of Banasur.

**Ushanas** (उशना): Ushanas were appointed as priests of asuras, who knew the science of bringing to life.

**Uttanka** (उत्तंक): Uttanka was a pupil of Veda, the third pupil of Dhaumya rishi. The other two pupils of Uttanka were Janamejaya and Poshya.

**Uttara** (उत्तर): A son of the Raja of Virata. Uttara was killed in battle by Salya.

**Uttarā** (उत्तरा): A daughter of the Raja of Virata. She married Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna.

**Uttar kānda** (उत्तरकांड): The part of epic Ramayana added later to the work of Valmiki.

## V

**Vagdevi:** Another name for Saraswati.

**Varaha** (वराह): The third Avatar of the Hindu Godhead Vishnu, in the form of a Boar. He appeared in order to defeat Hiranyaksha, a demon who had taken the Earth (Prithvi) and carried it to the bottom of what is described as the cosmic ocean in the story.

**Vaiśampāyana** (वैशंपायन): A celebrated sage who was the original teacher of the Black Yajur-Veda. He was a pupil of the great Vyasa, from whom he learned the Mahabharata, which he afterwards recited to King Janamejaya at a festival.

**Vaishnava** (वैष्णव): A sacrifice performed by Duryodhana in the forest. Yayati, Mandhata, Bharata and others also performed it.

**Vaishnava mantra** (वैष्णव मंत्र): An invocation which endows a missile with some of the irresistible power of Vishnu.

**Vaishnavism** (वैष्णव धर्म): Vaishnavism is a tradition of Hinduism, distinguished from other schools by its worship of Vishnu or his associated avatars, principally as Rama and Krishna, as the original and supreme God.

**Vaishrāvan** (वैश्रावण): Elder brother of Ravana to whom Rama returned Pushpaka after the death of Ravana.

**Vaishya** (वैश्य): One of the four fundamental varnas (colours) in Hindu tradition comprising merchants, artisans, and landowners.

**Vaivasvata Manu** (वैवस्वत मनु): Vaivasvata Manu (also Manu Vaivasvate) is one of the 14 Manus. He is considered the progenitor of the current Manvantara, which is the 7th of the 14 that make up the current Kalpa, each Kalpa making up a day of Brahma. He was born to Saranya and Vivasvat and was the King of Dravida during the epoch of the Matsya Purana. He was the founder of the Suryavansha race of kings.

**Vajrahanu** (वज्रहनु): One of Ravana's generals.

**Vajrayudha** (वज्रयुद्ध): The weapon with which Indra killed Visvarupa on suspicion because his mother belonged to the asura tribe of daityas.

**Valala** (वलाल): Assumed name of Bhima when, he worked as a cook at Virata's court.

**Vālī** (वाली): One of five great monkeys in Ramayana, a son of Indra, Monkey-king of Kishkindha and the cruel elder brother of Sugriva. He was killed by Rama.

**Vālmikī** (वाल्मिकी): Maharishi Valmiki is the author of the Hindu epic Ramayana, a brahman by birth, connected with the kings of Ayodhya, contemporary of Rama who invented the shloka metre, who taught the Ramayana to Kusa and Lava.

**Vāmadeva** (वामदेव): Vamadeva is the name of the "preserver" aspect of the god Shiva, one of five aspects of the universe he embodies. Also one of Dasharatha's priest.

**Vamana** (वामन): The fifth Avatara of Vishnu. He is the first Avatar of Vishnu which had a completely human form, although it was that of a dwarf brahmin.

**Vanāsura** (बाणासुर): Same as Banasur, was a thousand-armed asura, powerful and terrible. He was son of Bali. Bana was a follower of Shiva. Banasura had a beautiful daughter named Usha.

**Vanaprastha** (वानप्रस्थ): The third stage of the dvija's life, when he is required to relinquish worldly responsibilities to his heirs and retires to the woods with his wife for an anchorite's life. A person who is living in the forest as a hermit after giving up material desires.

**Vandi:** Court poet of Mithila who on being defeated by Sage Ashtavakra in debate drowned himself in the ocean and went to the abode of Varuna.

**Varaha** (वाराह): The third Avatar of Vishnu, who came in the form of a boar.

**Vardhamana** (वर्धमान): The northern gate of the Kuru capital Hastinapura.

**Varṇa** (वर्ण): Means - colour, Varna refers to the four naturally existing classes of society as given in the Hindu scriptures: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra.

**Vārṇāvata** (वारणावत): One of the provinces asked by Pandavas. A forest in which the Pandavas were asked to stay in a wax-house which was to be set on fire at midnight in order to kill the Pandavas while they were asleep.

**Varṣṇeya:** The charioteer of Rituparna, king of Ayodhya, who accompanied with Bahuka.

**Varuṇa** (वरुण): A god of the sky, of rain and of the celestial ocean, as well as a god of law and of the underworld.

**Varuṇī** (वरुणी): The goddess of wine.

**Vāsava** (वासव): Name of arrow of death, given by Indra to Karna.

**Vaśiṣṭha** (वशिष्ठ): Vasishtha was chief of the seven venerated sages (or Saptarishi) and the Rajaguru of the Suryavamsha. He was the manasaputra of Brahma. He had in his possession the divine cow Kamadhenu, and Nandini her child, who could grant anything to their owners. Arundhati was his wife.

**Vasudhana** (वसुधन): Another warrior who perished in the battle on the Twelfth Day.

**Vasudeva** (वसुदेव): Descendant of Yadu, husband of Rohini and Devaki. An epithet of Krishna. It means both son of Vasudeva and the supreme spirit that pervades the universe.

**Vasuki:** King of the Nagas or serpents who live in Patala. He was used by the gods and Asuras for a coil round the mountain Mandara at the churning of the ocean.

**Vatapi:** Vatapi and Ilvala, two Rakshasas, sons either of Hrada or Viprachitti. They are mentioned in the Ramayana as dwelling in the Dandaka forest.

**Vayu** (वायु): The god of air and wind who is also father of Bhima and Hanuman.

**Veda** (वेद): Collectively refers to a corpus of ancient Indo-Aryan religious literature that are considered by adherents of Hinduism to be revealed knowledge. Many Hindus believe the Vedas existed since the beginning of creation.

**Veda Vyasa** (वेद व्यास): Vyasa, author of the Mahabharata.

**Vibhandaka:** An ascetic who retired from the world and lived in the forest with his infant son Rishyasringa.

**Vibhishana** (विभीषण): Vibhishana was a rakshasa, brother of Ravana. He was of a noble character and advised Ravana, who kidnapped and abducted Sita, to return her to Rama.

**Vichitravīrya** (विचित्रवीर्य): Vichitravirya was Bhishma's half-brother, the younger son of queen Satyawati and king Santanu. Chitrangada, the elder brother of Vichitravirya, succeeded Santanu to the throne of Hastinapura. When he died childless, Vichitravirya, became king. He had two sons, Dhritarashtra and Pandu.

**Vidarbha:** Birar, and probably including with it the adjoining district of Beder, which name is apparently a corruption of Vidarbha. The capital was Kundinapura, the modern "Kundapur", about forty miles east of Amravati.

**Vidura** (विदुर): Vidura was a son of a maid-servant who served the Queens of Hastinapura, Queen Ambika and Ambalika. A friend of pandavas. After Krishna, he was the most trusted advisor to the Pandavas and had warned them repeatedly about Duryodhana's plots.

**Vijaya** (विजय): Name of Karna's bow.

**Vijayadashami** (विजयादशमी): A festival celebrated on the tenth day of the bright fortnight (Shukla Paksha) of the Hindu autumn month of Ashvin.

**Vikarna** (विकर्ण): A son of Dhritarashtra who declared the staking of Draupadi illegal, as Yudhishtira himself was a slave and had lost all his rights. Therefore, the Kauravas had not won Draupadi legally, he held

**Vikramaditya** (विक्रमादित्य): Vikramāditya is the name of a legendary king of Ujjain, famed for his wisdom, valour and magnanimity. The title "Vikramaditya" has also been assumed by many kings in Indian history, notably the Gupta King Chandragupta II.

**Vikukshi**: A king of the Solar race, who succeeded his father, Ikshwaku. He received the name of Sasada, 'hare-eater.' He was sent by his father to hunt and obtain flesh suitable for offerings. Being weary and hungry he ate a hare, and Vasishtha, the priest, declared that this act had defiled all the food, for what remained was but his leavings.

**Vinda** (विन्द), Anuvinda (अनुविन्द): Two brothers kings of Avanti, great soldiers whom were on the Kaurava side, they suffered defeat at the hands of Yudhamanyu.

**Vindhyas** (विन्ध्य): Vindhyas is a range of hills in central India, which geographically separates the Indian subcontinent into northern India (the Indo-Gangetic plain) and Southern India.

**Virāta** (विराट): King of Matsya, the country which was suggested by Bhima to live in incognito during the thirteenth year of their exile.

**Vīrabhadra** (वीरभद्र): Vīrabhadra was a demon that sprang from Shiva's lock of hair. Shiva burnt with anger when not invited in a sacrifice by Daksha and his wife Sati released the inward consuming fire and fell dead at Daksha's feet. Shiva burned with anger, and tore from his head a lock of hair, glowing with energy, and cast upon the earth. The terrible demon Vīrabhadra sprang from it. On the direction of Shiva, Virabhadra appeared with Shiva's ganas in the midst of Daksha's assembly like a storm wind and broke the sacrificial vessels, polluted the offerings, insulted the priests and finally cut off Daksha's head.

**Virādha** (विराध): A fierce rakshasa who seizes Sita.

**Vīrasen**: Father of Raja Nala, king of Nishadha.

**Virochana** (विरोचन): An asura, son of Prahlada, and father of Bali. He is also called Drisana. When the earth was milked, Virochana acted as the calf of the Asuras.

**Vishnu** (विष्णु): A form of God, to whom many Hindus pray. For Vaishnavas, He is the only Ultimate Reality or God. In Trimurti belief, He is the second aspect of God in the Trimurti (also called the Hindu Trinity), along with Brahma and Shiva. Known as the Preserver, He is most famously identified with His Avatars, especially Krishna and Rama.

**Vishvakarmā** (विश्वकर्मा): Vishwakarma is the presiding deity of all craftsmen and architects. he is the divine craftsman of the whole universe, and the official builder of all the gods' palaces. Vishwakarma is also the designer of all the flying chariots of the gods, and all their weapons.

**Viśvamitra** (विश्वामित्र): Brahmarishi Visvamitra or Vishvamitra was one of the most venerated rishi or sages of since ancient times in India. He was originally a Kshatriya but by austerities earned the title of Brahmarishi. He is also credited as the author of most of Mandala 3 of the Rigveda, including the Gayatri Mantra.

**Visoka** (विसोक): Bhima's charioteer.

**Visvarupa** (विस्वरूप): Name of Twashta's son who became the preceptor of the gods, Brihaspati having left when insulted by Indra.

**Vivimsati** (विविस्मति): A Kaurava hero and Duryodhana's brother.

**Viswarupa** (विस्वरूप): All-pervading, all-including form. See the description in the Bhagavad Gita chapter eleven.

**Vridhakshatra** (वृद्धक्षत्र): King of the Sindhus, father of Jayadratha into whose lap his son Jayadratha's head was caused to fall by Arjuna after cutting off Jayadratha's head.

**Vrika** (वृक): A Panchala prince who fell in battle.

**Vrikasthala** (वृकस्थल): One of the provinces asked by Pandavas. This province and town were situated in the southern part of Kuru Kingdom (Kuru Proper + Kurujangala). Krishna visited the town of Vrikasthala (in Gurgaon district of Haryana) and camped there for one night (5,84).

**Vrindavana:** A wood in the district of Mathura where Krishna passed his youth, under the name of Gopala, among the cowherds.

**Vrishha** (वृष), **Achala** (अचल): Shakuni's brothers.

**Vrishdarbha** (वृषदर्भ): A king of Benares, associated with the story of "The king, the Pigeon, and Hawk".

**Vrishni** (वृषणि): A descendent of Yadu, and the ancestor from whom Krsna got the name Varshneya

**Vrishnis**, (वृषणि): The descendant of Vrishni, son of Madhu, whose ancestor was the eldest son of Yadu. Krsna belonged to this branch of the Lunar race. The people of Dwaraka were known as the Vrishnis. Tribals of this race were devoted to the Pandavas, who with Sri Krishna visited the Pandavas in their exile.

**Vrishasena** (वृषसेन): Son of Karna, A warrior on the Kaurava side, slain by Arjuna.

**Vrishnis** (वृषणि): The people of Dwaraka to which belonged Krishna. After the death of Duryodhana his mother cursed that after 36 years Krishna should persish alone miserably and his people, the Vrishnis, should be destroyed.

**Vritra** (वृत्र): Means "the enveloper". Vritra, was an Asura and also a serpent or dragon, the personification of drought and enemy of Indra. Vritra was also known in the Vedas as Ahi ("snake"), cognate with Azhi Dahaka of Zoroastrian mythology and he is said to have had three heads. He was son of Twashta who was defeated by Indra's weapons Vajrayudha. He was born out of his father's sacrificial flames and became Indra's mortal enemy.

**Vrikodara** (वृकोदर): Wolf-bellied, an epithet of Bhima, denoting his slimness of waist and insatiable hunger.

**Vyasa** (व्यास): Compiler of the Vedas, son of sage Parasara.

**Vyuha** (व्युह): Battle arrays.

## Y

**Yādavas** (यादव): The descendants of Yadu, who dwelt by the Yamuna river.

**Yadu** (यदु): A prince of the lunar dynasty; Yadu is the name of one of the five Aryan clans mentioned in the Rig Veda. His descendants are called Yadavas.



The epic Mahabharata and Puranas refer to Yadu as the eldest son of mythological king Yayati.

**Yaduvamsis:** Those of the clan of Yadu.

**Yajñinna** (यज्ञिन्): A Vedic ritual of sacrifice performed to please the Devas, or sometimes to the Supreme Spirit Brahman. Often it involves a fire, which represents the god Agni, in the centre of the stage and items are offered into the fire.

**Yakṣa** (यक्ष): Yaksha or Yakkha (Pāli) is the name of a broad class of nature-spirits or minor deities who appear in Hindu and Buddhist mythology. The feminine form of the word is yakṣī or yakṣiṇī (Pāli: yakkhī or yakkhinī). subjects of Kubera, the god of wealth.

**Yama** (यम): Yama, also known as Yamarāja (यमराज) is the lord of death, first recorded in the Vedas. God of dharma, whose son was Yudhishtira. It is he whose questions Yudhishtira answered correctly whereupon his dead brothers were brought back to life on the banks of the enchanted pool.

**Yamas:** A yama (Sanskrit), literally translates as a "restraint", a rule or code of conduct for living virtuously.

**Yamuna** (जमुना): A river (also spelled Jamuna), joining with the Ganges. Literally meaning "twins" in Sanskrit, as it runs parallel to the Ganges, its name is mentioned at many places in the Rig Veda, written during the Vedic period ca between 1700–1100 BCE, and also in the later Atharvaveda, and the Brahmanas including Aitareya Brahmana and Shatapatha Brahmana.

**Yashodā** (यशोदा): Yasodā was wife of Nanda and foster-mother of, Krishna, who was given to them by Vasudeva. Yasoda also played an important role in the upbringing of Balarama and his sister Subhadra. She is also sometimes described as having her own daughter, known as Ekānaṅgā.

**Yavakrida:** Son of Sage Bharadwaja who was bent upon mastering the Vedas.

**Yayati** (ययाति): Emperor of the Bharata race who rescued Devayani from the well into which she had been thrown by Sharmishtha. He later married both Devayani and Sarmishtha. One of the ancestors of the Pandavas who became prematurely old due to Sukracharya's curse.

**Yoga** (योग): Spiritual practices performed primarily as a means to enlightenment (or bodhi). Traditionally, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Raja

Yoga are considered the four main yogas. In the West, yoga has become associated with the asanas (postures) of Hatha Yoga, popular as fitness exercises.

**Yoga Sutra** (योग सूत्र): One of the six darshanas of Hindu or Vedic schools and, alongside the Bhagavad Gita and Hatha Yoga Pradipika, are a milestone in the history of Yoga.

**Yogi** (योगी): One who practices yoga, These designations are mostly reserved for advanced practitioners. The word "yoga" itself—from the Sanskrit root yuj ("to yoke") --is generally translated as "union" or "integration" and may be understood as union with the Divine, or integration of body, mind, and spirit.

**Yudhāmanyu** (युधामन्यु): A Panchala prince supporting the Pandavas, who was assigned the task of protecting the wheels of Arjuna's chariot along with Uttamauja. He was slain in his sleep by Ashvatthama.

**Yudhishtira** (युधिष्ठिर): Yudhishtira was the eldest son of King Pandu and Queen Kunti, king of Hastinapura and Indraprastha, and World Emperor. He was the principal protagonist of the Kurukshetra War, and for his unblemished piety, known as Dharmaraja.

**Yuga** (युग): In Hindu philosophy (and in the teachings of Surat Shabd Yoga) the cycle of creation is divided into four yugas (ages or eras).

**Yuga Dharma** (युगधर्म): One aspect of Dharma, as understood by Hindus. Yuga dharma is an aspect of dharma that is valid for a Yuga,. The other aspect of dharma is Sanatan Dharma, dharma which is valid for eternity.

**Yuyudhāna** (युयुधान): Another name of Satyaki, who was not killed in the warfare but in a mutual fight among Yadavas.

**Yuyutsu** (युयुत्सू): A noble son of Dhritarashtra who bent his head in shame and sorrow when Yudhishtira lost Draupadi. He also disapproved of the unfair way in which Abhimanyu was killed.

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